Impact of
ŚRĪ RĀMĀNUJĀÇĀRYA
on
TEMPLE WORSHIP

Smt. SAROJINI JAGANNATHAN

The bhakti movement emerging in 6th century India, challenged the existing Vedic religion and the brahmins led the van by giving more importance to bhakti than to knowledge which was the domain of a select few. The idea was to realise a direct relationship with God. This thought remains enshrined in the sacred 'four-thousand' of the Ālvārs. The highly theistic movement finally found a temple-centred expression.

Rāmānuja (1017-1137 A.D.)after succeeding to his pontifical seat in Śrīrangam, laid down monumental reforms in temple administration. After his return from Mysore, he set out to propagate Śrivaiṣnavism. His magnum opus, the Śribhaṣya gave birth to many commentaries and glosses, which comprise almost half the entire body of work pertaining to the system. Although his writings indicate a shade of brahminical exclusiveness, Rāmānuja introduced liberal practices. The lower classes were given great opportunities which fostered the democratisation of Vaiṣnavism - without compromising on Vedic puritanism. He organised the existing temples and arranged for the worship of the deity mainly according to the Pançarātra agama. He also incorporated the hymns of the Ālvars, giving these songs a status at par with the Vedas.

Being conscious of the limitations of bhakti-yoga, he propounded prapatti-yoga, or complete submission to God. Thus, he achieved a perfect synthesis of the gnana of the scriptures and the bhakti of the Ālvārs. His philosophy and preachings were a direct response to the needs of the time. Rāmānuja made the temple a centre of learning as well as worship giving importance to arçāvatāra. He

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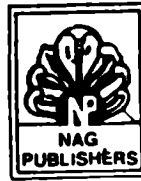
By :
Smt. SAROJINI JAGANNATHAN

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Dedicated to
The Lord of the Seven Hills
Śrī Venkaṭeśvara
and His Divine Consort

श्रीः

From

SRI AHOBILA MUTT

ஸ்ரீ அஹோபில மடம்

Camp ... श्रीरङ्गम् ...

To

Sri Sarojini Jagannath

Date 27-10-1992

॥ श्रीमते श्रीलक्ष्मीनृसिंह परब्रह्मणे नमः ॥

॥ श्रीमते श्रीवण्शठकोप श्रीवेदान्तदेशिक यतीन्द्र महादेशिकाय नमः ॥

सन्तु श्रेयांसि भूयांसि।

सरोजिनी जगन्नाथ ग्रथितं ग्रन्थमद्भुतम्।
रामानुजाचार्य काल विद्यालय निभासकम्॥
पूर्व पश्चात्कालिकीं च विद्यालय परिस्थितिम्।
प्रदर्शयन्तं सद्ग्रन्थं विमर्शैः तोषदं सताम्॥
विवेकिनो पक्षपाताः विलोक्येदं विमर्शनम्।
अलङ्कुर्वन्तु सुधियं कैङ्कर्य~~...~~स्याभिवृद्धये॥
श्रीलक्ष्मीनृसिंह तत्पाद रताचार्य प्रसादतः।
श्रेयांसि सन्तु भूयांसीत्याशासे विदुषीमिमाम्॥

[signature]

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The impact of Sri Ramanujacharya on Temple Worship by Srimathi Sarojini Jagannathan is a source of accurate information about the evolution of Visishtadvaitha philosophy. The contributions made by Sri Ramanujacharya and the Alwaras towards this evolution is clearly narrated here. Sri Ramanujacharya according to the author was influenced by Alwars and the theory of Archavathara. Hence he could bring the Vedic and Upanishadic philosophy to the level of understanding of the common man. This is the reason why the Visishtadvaita philosophy is followed by all varnas in the South. The Tirupati and Sri Rangam Temples stand to throw light on the ability of Sri Acharya in organising Temple Worship. But for him these temples might not have acquired their present stature. Srimathi Sarojini Jagannathan through her indepth study has made a significant contribution in bringing out intricate philosophical aspects of Visishtadvaitha for the benefit of the learned and the layman alike.

We pray Sri Krishna to bless her publication and enable the author to derive a sense of fulfilment.

VIBHUDHISHA THIRTHA SWAMIJI
ADMAR MUTT, UDUPI
SRI MADHWACHARYA SAMASTHANAM

PREFACE

This book owes itself to a study grant from the Ministry of Human Resource Development. I have looked upon it as an pportunity for a thesis in liberty to commemorate the great task rī Rāmānujaçārya had accomplished both in propounding the hilosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita and also blending it into the āñçarātra and the songs of the Ālvārs to make Śrī Vaiṣṇavism n all-embracing creed irrespective of caste and sex. Sri āmānuja's rare courage in affirming the fact that religion evolves tself solely to ennoble human dignity establishes him as more atholic than any of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava preceptors. He belongs to hose ever lasting phenomena who linger on infinitely to influence he social psyche.

For this work I could not procure much historical evidence, hat being the case the only sources available were the literary ecords on the darśana of Rāmānuja. Though there are temple nscriptions and traditional accounts they were all later to his eriod. However, they furnish valuable data about the social, conomic, and religious life of the people of those times. After āmānuja there was an outburst of intellectual activity by his olowers for more than three centuries, which fertilised men's ninds and hearts all over southern India. This activity constituted theme of more abiding interest than even the conquest of mighty mperors. This period saw the rise of classical Sanskrit, Maṇipravāla and the development of the popular regional anguage. It moulded the character and civilization of the people round. Above all it saw the evolution of the art of writing - a rincipal instrument of the advancement of learning and the liffusion of knowledge.

My study has been rendered possible to a large measure by he Vaishnava chronicles (bountiful resources of the temples) like he Koil Olugu, the Tirumalai Olugu, the Divyasūriçaritām, a few ommentaries on the Ālvārs' Prabandhams, monographs on the our temples with which Rāmānuja had intimate and personal

The traditional accounts like the Prapannāmruta, Guruparamparā and the Lakṣmī Kāvyam served as important documents in corroborating details though some of them belong purely to the realm of hagiography. Inscriptions do not surprisingly speak of the great Açārya though he was the spiritual and the temporal leader of the affairs of these temples.

Later inscriptions are of tremendous value in studying about a succint sketch of the activities following Rāmānuja's time - how munificent benefactions have been endowed by kings and richmen for festivals and çāturvedimangalams.

The epigraphical information which I have given is all drawn from the following books -

1) V.N. Hari Rao - The History of the Śrirangam Temple
2) Dr. N. Ramesan - The Tirumala Temple
3) Sri T.K.T. Veera Raghavachari - History of Tirupati
4) B.R. Gopal - Rāmānuja in Karnataka.

Though not specially equipped for the venture of jotting down a comprehensive study of Sri Ramanuja's darṣana and his skill in organising temple worship, I must admit that it was only my preoccupation with religious studies all these years that gave fillip to this work.

I have drawn extensively from pieces of literary evidence available to give factual information. My intention was not to put forth original points of view, rather it was to make a simple undertaking to arrange and present the great strides in temple worship - since and after the time of Ramanuja. As the subject is so sublime and splendid, any kind of treatment by authors cannot rob it of its dignity.

My late father who possessed abundant vitality of mind and senses cast off the intellectualism he imbibed from his Western education when he found ultimate rest and joy in the Vaiṣnava ideal of love. For him, Vaiṣnavism was the finest flowering of the Hindu spirit. In his association, I learnt the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom. When I was working on the Śrīrangam temple during this project, I relived those days when my father used to take me to Śrīrangam on many a sojourn relating anecdotes of the great Āçārya's life. My mother, in every sense an ideal Hindu wife has always been supportive of my ventures. I deem it a great fortune to have inherited such a legacy from my parents.

I am deeply beholden to Dr. V. Varadachari of The French Indological Research Institute, Pondicherry for his meticulous guidance and kindliness. I could never have had the grasp of the subject but for his unfailing readiness always to help.

My thanks are also due to Dr. K.K.A. Venkatachari of the Anantacharya Indological Research Institute, Bombay for his guidance and help in getting the sources.

My foremost thanks are due to Sri Ka-Sri-Sri of Kalaimagal, who at the initial stages encouraged me with his rich writing experience. He also gifted away some of his valuable books to me. But for his encouragement I could not have fulfilled this project. I shall always cherish with respect my association with him.

When I went to seek blessings for this project, from the Paramāçārya Svāmi of Kānçikāmakotipeetham - words rolled from his mouth asking whether the project would be a Divyacharita of Sri Rāmānuja. Though I tried to resist this approach in the early stages, as that was not my aim - it finally ended as a biography of the saint, though in parts.

I am grateful to the late Jīyar of Ahobila Math (to which I belong) who taught me the concept of prapatti. The present Jīyar has blessed me with his Srīmukham. I cherish this as a great boon.

I owe great thanks to scholars like Sri V.T. Tirunarayana Iyengar of Mysore University who taught me in a nutshell the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita, Sri Nadamuni Arayar of Srirangam, the late Sri Velugudi Varadachari for their lessons in prabandhas and Kesava Bhattar of Bangalore for enlightening me on the Pānçarāta āgamas.

Any amount of words cannot adequately express my gratitude to Sri Admārsvāmi (Senior) of Udupi who has been my mentor and teacher for the past twenty years. He has guided me on some valuable points in the philosophy of Rāmānuja and has heartily blessed this project.

I wish to thank Shri Ananta Kulavi who has ungrudgingly entered the text in the word processor as a labour of love, and also Sri Himanshu Pahad M.S. University, Baroda for his excellent reproduction of photographs.

My thanks are also due to friends and members of my family, especially my sister Srimati Padmini Sarangan for the kind help she gave in correcting the proof.

I have dedicated this book to the Lord of the Seven Hills and His Divine Consort whom Rāmānuja hails as the Supreme Brahman in his Śribhaşya and by Whose grace I am what I am.

Sarojini Jagannathan
New Delhi
September 1993

SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

अ	a	ढ	ḍh
आ	ā	ण	ṇ
इ	i	त	t
ई	ī	थ	th
उ	u	द	d
ऊ	ū	ध	dh
ऋ	ṛ	न	n
ए	e	प	p
ऐ	ai	फ	ph
ओ	o	ब	b
औ	au	भ	bh
क	k	म	m
ख	kh	य	y
ग	g	र	r
घ	gh	ल	l
ङ	ṅ	व	v
च	c	श	ś
छ	ch	ष	ṣ
ज	j	स	s
झ	jh	ह	h
ञ	ñ	क्ष	kṣ
ट	ṭ	त्र	tṛ
ठ	ṭh	ज्ञ	jñ
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Of India, it may perhaps be said that through the centuries, her destiny has rested in the hands of benevolent kings and wise men, who were known for their remarkable qualities of wisdom. In a land of many streams of religion and culture it is only a very great teacher whose precepts can stand the test of time. These are the men who enriched the land with their deep philosophical wisdom. The modern generation is turning again for guidance and knowledge from these masters, to get the best from the past for building a greater India. I mean, there is a general trend of renaissance to go back in the lane of history in quest of knowledge and wisdom. It is difficult to assess the incalculable spiritual debt we owe to our ancient seers. These men arrived at the proper time, and stood staunchly by their convictions, gave up the prizes the world could bestow. They also gave counsel by their understanding and proved good angury in the form of prophecies, and spiritual work. They were honoured in their own days for they set to notion spiritual and intellectual powers to accomplish goals in lifting mankind from its slumber.

Great ideas germinated in the minds of these people. Nurtured by fortune and a sense of practicality those ideas were transformed into great achievements. Wherever they were the world knew to acknowledge the success of these fortunate mortals. Their dreams always bore fruit. Here is the poignant story of such a dream by the great mystic of Sri Vaiṣṇnavism Sri Rāmānujaçārya.

Religion has been the inexhaustible fountain and as a source of human passion. So in the history of civilisation, we find it manifest in the lowest primitive as well as in the learned thinker. It fosters the faith in man that he is not alone and that a superior power pervades this world and conducts its affairs. This was when man began to learn that God is the beginning of all things and also the end.

More than three millenia ago when the Āryans fanned their way into the Punjab and Indus Valley, their society was governed

by a polity, a special feature of which was worship of the Gods of the open sky, Indra, Varuṇa and Agni being the major Gods. Rudra, Uṣas and Sūrya were the minor ones. Viṣnu is mentioned as the pervader and he took three strides. This early religion consisted of propitiation of these Gods, by the brahminical purohita who passed on the prayers to the Gods through agni and performed Vedic sacrifices with appropriate mantras prescribed in the Vedas themselves. This first phase spanned over eight centuries from 1500 B.C. to 700 B.C. The second phase dawned with the advent of the Upaniṣads, which are abstruse metaphysical texts speaking of God-man relationship.

This phase more or less coincided with the rise of Buddhism and Jainism. When the relative dryness of the former and the abstruseness of the latter were attacked by the heretics and replaced by human ethics more appealing to the masses, real danger cropped up in brahminical orthodoxy.

Now the period of the Gītā makes a turning point with its supreme call to do one's duty and advocated varṇāśrama or caste. The Gītā surpasses karma prescribed in the sūtras and by presenting Bhakti, cuts short the Upaniṣadic adventure in the realm of search for God. The Gītā brought the Vedas and Upaniṣads to the level of the masses. Post Gītā Hinduism stood on the tripod of karma, gnāna and bhakti. When bhakti became dominant, the Vedic tradition was eclipsed by the more glamorous tradition of temple worship. This tradition became so strong that from the 5th to 6th century A.D. and especially in the Tamil country the nāyanmārṣ and Ālvārs led the bhakti movements. By the time of Śankara's emergence it looked as though the Vedas and Upaniṣads were thereafter to function merely as back drops while bhakti acquired greater importance. Śaṅkara chose the Brahma Sūtras as the common point and in his interpretation revealed his own thoughts on the matter. But his intellectual path led to the conclusions resembling the Nirguṇa Brahman.

Śaṅkara believed that there cannot be any combination of knowledge and ritualistic duties of life, and the ritualistic and other duties imposed on man by the scriptures can only make us fit for the study of Vedānta and nothing more, but Rāmānuja interpreted the theory of advaita allowing the differentiation of reality without implying any difference in the reality itself.

There are proofs of dominant theistic ideas in the Vedic literature. It is a religion, a monotheism based on personal

devotion to the supreme deity variously named Nārāyaṇa, Hari, Bhagavan, Rāmā and Kṛṣṇa. Viśnu is associated with the highest heaven. His three steps became later the foundation for His other avatāras. Scholars think that the three steps are symbolic of the three periods of sun's rays, his çakra as the symbol of the solar disc etc.. His three steps suggest His omnipresence. Since He being the moral ruler He should know all acts of men, so He must be omnipresent. The brief survey of the references to the Vedic literature comprising the mantra, Brahmana and the Upaniṣad sections brings us to the conclusion that already in the Vedic times, Viṣṇu was a God of worship. So it is easy for the later religious leaders to build upon these data the superstructure of Vaiṣṇavism. The doctrines of grace, bhakti and prapatti must have been known to the Vedic poets. This Vedic Vaiśnavism was later identified with the worship of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa. The concept of Viṣnu and movement of Vaiṣnavism were being continually reshaped and moulded by areas of theology, rituals, cult and artistic manifestations. The myth created by such an influence got transformed or modified through two ways (1) practice and (2) pervasiveness of ritual. Viṣṇu and Vaiṣnavism present a case for undertaking an investigation of the process of collective psyche, nurtured by a living oral tradition. The concept of Viṣṇu and the impact of Vaiṣnavism is only a part of a totality of Indian vision and approach.

Vaiṣnavism is a religion of high antiguity. Down from the Vedas it has been receiving merited treatment. the Mahābhārata, Viśnupurāṇa, the Bhagavata Purāṇa, Viṣṇu Dharmottara and Varāha Purāṇas, all these contain references to the tenets of Vaiṣnavism and exclusive devotion to Viṣṇu. Hence the ground must be taken to have been already prepared for further development as a highly devotional cult in the early centuries of the Christian era.

The deity of the Bhagavad Gītā : The Gītā speaks of the Brahman as the imperishable who is Lord Kṛṣṇa and there is none equal to Him. Assuming that the world is real the Gītā teaches that it forms a part of the Supreme being created and dissolved by Him. Though in His transcendental aspect, He is unknown but is revealed in His religion to the universe as the Supreme self. All that exists is a part of Him. Though prevading in all these things, He does not share in their evil nature but on the contrary is characterised by grace. Nothing delights Him so much as mankind's whole hearted devotion. His grace extends even to

the most undeserving people so that they may come to Him quickly and get freed from their sins and finally attain mōkṣa.

Religion is life itself and if it is an autonomous activity of the human mind, different from ethics and morality, it is impossible for it to exist without the recognition of the reality of God. If we recognise religion as an autonomous activity different from all other spheres of human life the only point in which it is distinguished is its recognition of a personal Supreme being who creates, maintains and sustains the order of both nature and history. Religion starts with the Supreme mind enabling us to ascend from man to God. This is the ontological basis for religious belief. Mere intellect cannot do justice to the complex character of religious consciousness and religion is understood in terms of its function of bringing to completion the inner possibilities of man. God as a value and only in relationship between Him and man, His nature is fully revealed. Bhakti or devotion suggests His personal relationship when both are personal in nature. Bhakti being volitional includes knowledge and action.

To the modern researcher the Vedas are the compilation of different views at different times. The Upaniṣadic period is a progression of thought to Pantheism and monistic idealism. The Upaniṣads on the whole present conflicting views. In the epic period intuition gave place to intellectual enquiry. The Gītā is an adaptation made of the absoluteness of the Upaniṣads to the popular needs of theism. The avatāra theory is symbolic of the main stages in the onward march of the world from dust to deity. The Sūtra period marks the critical spirit in cryptic form and lastly the scholastic period was the growth of the polemic thought with logic and faith. Thus in the fall from monism to theism we find philosophy compromising with logical faith and forming a popular religion.

In the Brāhmana period Visnu emerges as a supreme deity and still later as Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa which cult blends with that of Bhagavan (non-Vedic); this was then brāhmanised and changed into Vaiṣṇavism.

Rāmānuja synthesised the Upaniṣads' monism and the non-Vedic theism by identifying the Brahman of the Upaniṣads with Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa, Bhagavan and Kṛṣṇa. Thus he fused together the Vedāntic dualism and non-Vedic monotheism of the Gītā and the faith of the Ālvārs. Visnu is a mosaic of many trends of thought. Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita recognises the claims of both

faith and reason and harmonises by a free play of reason on the spiritual intuition or "Anubhava" of the great seers of yore.

The Vedic deity Viṣṇu is fused with the Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudéva cult which has become the Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudéva cult - the Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa religion of Vaiṣṇavism. The story of the avatāras is the puranic interpretation of the evolution, man's ascent from sub-human levels. The Vedāntic Sūtras afford the true insight into Vedic religions, while explaining the worship of different Vedic Gods as that of the inner self or the antaryamin - The Supreme Brahman. The object of Vedānta is to raise man to the level of God. True religion is a self revelation of God to the self with a view to perfect it.

Rāmānuja repeatedly emphasises that Nārāyaṇa is the cause of the periodic origination and dissolution of the universe. He alone is above the world order according to karma. He alone controls it since it is simply the expression of His pleasure or displeasure.

The great bhakti movement of the Ālvārs and Śaiva āçāryas naturally forms one of the brightest periods of Indian History. This covers the Pallava period, 5th to the 7th century A.D.. Śrī Rāmānuja in whom the bhakti movement found a competent philosophical exponent was responsible for the everlasting influence of Viśiṣṭādvaita. He lived from A.D. 1017 to 1137. Kūréśa, a devoted disciple of Rāmānuja helped him in his Śrī Bhāsya. Rāmānuja went to Śārada Pitham at Kashmir, to consult the Bodhāyana Vṛitti, from which he drew inspiration for the Śrī Bhāṣya, the sheet anchor of Vaiṣṇavism. The connection with Kashmir even in those distant times is noteworthy and due note of this has unfortunately not been taken by historians. Rāmānuja's influence at Tirupati continues even today though 850 years have lapsed since his death. The attention he paid to the works of Ālvārs and the necessity of their daily recitals in the routine of temple worship shows the divine importance. Rāmānuja attached to their teaching as a basis for his system. The epoch of Rāmānuja can be likened to that of world teachers like Confucius and the Buddha. The four religious centres - Śrīrangam, Tirupati, Kāñcipuram and Melkote are still brimming with his splendour. The cardinal faith of Rāmānuja is narrated in the works of later Āçāryas. Prapatti is a state of prayerfulness to God with the deep conviction that He alone is the saviour. The devotee's prayers are actuated by deep affection and no other motive. With the divine presence of God he becomes infused with the spirit of friendship

and charity towards all. Service is for the servitude of the god as well as His bhaktas.

The neo Vaiṣnavism as propounded by Rāmānuja marks a turning point in the history of Hindu religion; any account of religious and philosophical tradition is incomplete without reference to the contribution of Rāmānuja. For centuries following his emergence, millions of Hindus have looked upon him as their path finder. In the innumerable homes and temples where deities are worshipped and festivals held, it is Rāmānuja's writ that is working. Not only that, his system of thought has influenced many religious movements in the north of (Rāmānanda, Vallabha, Çaitanya and Śaṅkara Deva). Rāmānuja provided both the love of god and a philosophy even for the common man. He was a revolutionary, made ready deviations from the run-of-the mill pattern of life, for the good of mankind.

My aim in this work is to celebrate the mighty work done by Rāmānuja for the organisation and upkeep of the four Vaiṣnava temples namely Śrīrangam, Tirupati, Melkōṭe and Kāṇçīpuram. With which he was closely associated. In the mighty task, he was inspired by the hymns of the Ālvārs, the mystics of the medieval period, and also by the Pāñçarātra āgama of the traditional yore.

He was initiated into Vaiṣṇavism by Mahāpūrṇa, who was the disciple of Yāmuna, grandson of Nāthamuni the first in the line of the preceptors. Rāmānuja was attracted by the Ārça theory which the Ālvārs eulogised in their songs. Ārça is a view that the consecrated images are also manifestations of the Brahman for the benefit of the worshipper. That is to say - the Lord incarnates on his own will in the images to shower His grace on the devotees.

He did yoeman service in organising temple worship and effected reforms in their administration. By refuting advaitic doctrines and with the aid of the Brahmasūtras, Upaniṣads and the Gītā, he propounded the Viśiṣṭādvaita system, popularised the Divya Prabandham and trained a line of āçāryās who rendered great service to the cause of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism and maintained the form of temple worship as modelled by him. After his time, the importance of the temple and service to the deity as a personal God housed therein assumed new dimensions. The emphasis laid on the Ārça form and the value of service and surrender, every Vaiṣnava deemed it his duty and honour to do one kind of a

service or the other to the temple. This was the pattern of every village till recent times. The picture changed when the Vaiṣṇava brāhmins left the spiritual centres, in quest of jobs outside their home towns.

All strides towards an evolved Vaiṣṇavism seemed to move towards a confluence in Rāmānuja, who stood as a symbol of the unity of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. He consolidated Śrī Vaiṣṇavism by carrying out the posthumous behests of Yāmuna and with such a consolidation could withstand the strain and other disruptive forces. His courage of pronouncing the mantra to a multi-communal crowd, his magnum Opus, the Śrī bhāṣya, his reform of the Śrīrangam temple administration are all significant landmarks in the development of systematic worship in Vaiṣnava temples. He was not merely a thinker but also a person of sustained action. He followed Pāñçarātra āgamic system for the above job and strengthened the Vaiṣṇava system.

His essential contribution to Indian thought was, to have developed a coherent philosophical basis for bhakti based on the hymns of the Alvārs; in sharp distinction to advaita. Actually it replaced the impersonal Vedānta by the doctrine of the personal God. The central ideal of Rāmānuja's darśana is perhaps the synthetic unity of God as the immanent spirit, guide and Controller of the Universe full of diverse elements, animate and inanimate. He succeeded in spreading his doctrines and perpetuating his religious arrangements through his disciples. Śrī Vaiṣṇavism though a Vedic religion owes equal allegiance to the Prabandhas and its commentaries which reveal an attitude of mind governing the evolution of that religion. The Temple forms a part of it, where religion could be practised. He organised the effectual administration and temple rituals with his amazing skill and wanted the members of the community to understand the greatness of service to God according to their potentials and develop religious affiliations of people in and around the temple. With slight changes made here and there his system has been working well for approximately a thousand years today. The temples have such a complex administrative system which is in vogue even today and Rāmānuja takes the cake singularly. In this organised process there were men and women, people of all castes and communities in South India. Rāmānuja enjoyed a very devoted following who proved efficient in their offices, carrying out the religious trust which he created and bestowed upon them for the salvation of the masses. In spite of many pitfalls, the

sacred mandate of Rāmānuja has spread far and wide and is directed towards the well being of the world. The result was the temple became a vast socio-religious centre. It became a link between men and God, society and religion. It became a positive force during his time and exists the same way even today.

At the highest level which is commonly described as ritual, Rāmānuja had the conviction, that religion and philosophy are not alien to men nor are they dealing with problems beyond life. Rāmānuja used the word religion in the broadest sense of the term, as to mean awareness and an attitude which would keep society alert, active and evolve further.

Before the advent of Rāmānuja the great Viṣṇu temples in southern country were in a disorganised state, and had ceased to attract spiritual seekers. Rāmānuja's first task was to reform temple worship and make them spiritual centres once more. he accomplished this task with great skill. With his writings he provided a powerful array of disciples for his Viśiṣṭādvaita system, which was unambiguous and sound. It is difficult to appraise the life and work of Rāmānuja which has inspired every theistic movement in India for the last thousand years. He emphasised certain elements of the Vedic teachings and formulated them in an integrated manner. His contribution to temple worship resulted in the rise of temple activities which directly helped their administration. His way of life and preachings have exerted profound influence on the Vaiṣṇava community for a religious life. Rāmānuja's greatness has over shadowed that of the āçāryas before and after him.

THE EVOLUTION OF VIṢṆU AND THE HISTORY OF VAIṢṆAVISM

Philosophy, whatever view we may hold about its content and function has one task of presenting an integrated view of human experience. It is also interesting to note that philosophy and religion have been the most absorbing preoccupation of man. Refinement of the deep religious consciousness has been a continuous process. This conciousness resulting in spiritual activities has exercised a tremendous influence on various aspects of man's social and moral life as well. The history of Indian religious thought is a long one – starting from pre-historic times. In its earliest beginnings it must have been monotheistic rather than polytheistic. The historical records of the above as extant in the vedic literature can to a certain extent be relied upon for an insight into its stages of evolution.

Vaiṣṇavism in one of the major religions of India centering on the worship of any one form or aspect of Viṣṇu whose antiquity is traceable to Vedic literature and even to non and pre-Āryan sources. The personality of Viṣṇu as a distinct God in the Brahminical pantheon has included in its content Vedic, and non Vedic elements as well as the philosophical stand points leading to Vaiṣnava Siddhānta, which lays stress on bhakti. The interest *Kṛṣṇa* cult had generated in the later Gītā period and the Vaiṣṇavite ritualistic pattern had given a tremendous push to a firm finding of Vaiṣṇavism in general and Śri Vaiṣṇavism of the South in particular.

Viṣṇu is one of the important Gods in Vedic mythology. Though humble in the beginning, he eventually ascends to the status of the sole and Supreme God in classical mythology. Gods who were acclaimed as supreme at one time or another must have been given trial. But since Viṣṇu possessed some extraordinary attributes such as pervasiveness and the ability to support the eternal ordinances, he must have become the greatest of all Gods.

As we go into the evolution of thought at religious and philosophical levels, we see a gradual course for stream-lining Viṣṇu to reach the zenith of divine glory.

EVOLUTION OF VIṢṆU

VIṢṆU IN VEDIC LITERATURE

The beginning of Viṣṇu mythology in the Ṛg Veda contains subtle elements which contribute to his eventual ascension to the status of the sole and supreme God. He is mentioned in many places in the Ṛgveda[1] Veda as having measured the universe in three giant strides, and pervaded the universe[2]. Of the three steps, the third is the highest which is beyond the reach of ordinary perception[3]. This highest footstep is Paramapada, the abode of Viṣṇu which though beyond the reach of all beings, is said to be perceived constantly by the sūris or the sages, who are ever wakeful through prayers[4]. He is the primeval seed of the cosmic order[5]. He is the preserver who protects unfailingly those who offer gifts since his strides are far reaching. He is Tridhatu, and thus supports the earth, the heaven and all the worlds[6].

The Taittriya Araṇyaka 10.1.7 reads thus : "We worship Nārāyaṇa, dedicate our mind to Vāsudeva. May Viṣṇu therefore lead us to prosperity". The concept of Brahman attributed to and amalgamated with Viṣṇu is a mighty one. The Brahman of the Ṛg Veda originally denoted prayer, the power of the hymn and then the power of sacrifice. The concept of Viṣṇu as a pervasive spirit came to be identified with the concept of Brahman. Viṣṇu's identification with sacrifice first attempted in the Puruṣa Sūkta X.90 became a matter of course. Satapatha Brāhmana 1.2.5.1 and VII 5.6 identifies Viṣṇu with sacrifice. The same text refers to Him as Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa who performed the Pāñçarātra sacrifice. The Aitreya Brāhmana (1.1) declares Viṣṇu to be the greatest God. Kaṭhopanishad recommends Yoga or spiritual communion for the attainment of Viṣṇu's Parampada, which is the end of soul's spiritual journey; the highest goal which is borne out by

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1. Ṛgveda,1.104.1
2. ibid,1.2.17
3. ibid,1.156.5
4. ibid,1.22.20-21
5. ibid,1.156.3
6. ibid,1.154.4

later literary evidence such as the Mahābhārata, Viṣṇu Purāna and the Gītā.

"He who grants fearlessness to all beings attains
the blessed and blissful abode of Viṣṇu"[7]

"That is the sacred and the highest station of Viṣṇu, which is beyond the pradhāna i.e. Prakṛti (individual) soul, unmanifest in space and time and which the wise sages perceive."[8]

"That is the highest abode of Viṣṇu where the mind becomes steady and tranquil"[9]

"That is the highest abode which neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the fire light up and on attaining which there is no return."[10]

Thus the evolution of thought on both religious as well as philosophical planes converged and streamlined a course for Viṣṇu to reach the utmost height of divine glory. We find similar references in classical Tamil literature (2nd Century B.C. to 2nd Century A.D.). Ettuthogai an anthology of eight works and another work the Tolkāppiam refers to Viṣṇu as Māyōn probably derived from Māman and Māyam both of which denote valour, beauty and dark, i.e. Kṛṣṇa in Sanskrit. The entire mythological account of Viṣṇu is found in the aforesaid poems. Viṣṇu the Cosmic Puruṣa with thousands of hands etc. of the Puruṣa Sūkta also finds mention in Paripāṭal 37. The Vyūha doctrine of Kṛṣṇa Samkarṣana, Pradyumna of the Pāñcarātra must have been prevalent in Tamil Nadu during this period. Puranānūru refers to Viṣṇu redeeming the Sun God from captivity in the realm of asuras. Padiṭruppatu describes the temple of Viṣṇu at Tiruvananthapuram.

The references we find in these Tamil classics suggest a pan Indian concept of Brāhminical Gods spread throughout the length and breadth of this land and Viṣṇu is considered the highest among them.

EVOLUTION OF THE DEITY, ITS GUNAS AND THEIR ORIGIN

The Vedas represent the earliest extant literature in the World. They throw light on many aspects of the life of ancient

7. Mahabharata,XI.1.25
8. Viṣṇu Purāṇa,11.16
9. Bhāgavata Purāṇa, 11.1.19
10. Bhagavad Gītā, S. V.6

Indian people dealing essentially with religious beliefs and practices. To invoke a deity in fulfilment of an offering as thanksgiving was prevalent even during those days. This was done in the sacred fire which was believed to have conveyed to the deity concerned. While the Ṛg Veda contains the prayers, the offerings are prescribed in the Yajur Veda. The Sāma Veda helps in understanding the prayers and the Atharva provides the means to protect oneself against evil forces.

Ancient Indians meditated upon the Gods. From the ecstasy they experienced, there arose a musical setting known as mantra which consisted of ovations or invocations and deliberations, so that the Gods became identical with the mantra. Culturally, the standard of the Ṛg Veda marks a well advanced stage of society. From internal evidence we see that the other samhitas are more or less enlargements of certain portions of the Ṛg Veda.

The Indo Āryans were placed in the midst of nature which made an abiding impact on them with the result they revered nature. The ṛṣis in their metaphysical enquiries concentrated on the creator. By means of three methods, the theological, metaphysical and the psychological they unravelled the systems of the universe. Through intense devotion they must have perceived the quality of the creator or the cosmic being, comprehending the whole universe as his body.

The hymns of "Hiraṇyagarbha" and "Viśvakarman" talk of the origin of creation. The puruṣa sukta defined the pantheistic view of creation. Though the metaphysical thought is not well developed in the Ṛg Veda, as much as in the Upaniṣads, it is rather difficult to decide the exact nature of Gods in the Vedas. They are supposed to be represented as human in form.

In their search for the true principle the ṛṣis conceived of an infinite and absolute power as the primary cause of all creation. This was perhaps the best exposition of monism.

The hymns of Hiraṇya garbha and Viśvakarman talk of the exposition of monism. The doctrine of the identity of the deity and its form was already a part of the purāṇic tradition which looked upon it as a combination of power, consciousness and bliss. Śri Rāmānujāçārya holds that the deity is formless only in the sense that he has a material from which is divine; its beauteousness is beyond description. The Upaniṣads advocate the view that Brahman is conceived as joy and bliss and is an abstract principle, but one whose infinite bliss is incomparable

to the fragmentary blisses of all the other beings of the world. The thinkers of the Upaniṣads are sure that Brahman has a form of aesthetic perfection which attracts the minds of the seers.

CONCEPTION OF THE DEITY IN THE UPANIṢAD

The definite attribute and the divine form being what is essentially inseparable from its unity, God is set to have a form of consciousness or one of bliss. The deity is a repository of innumerable divine attributes and is even regarded as having a form made up of them. Six of these are held to be most prominent and hence He is described by the Āgamas and afterwards by Rāmānuja as having a form with six attributes identifiable with God. The synonyms for power, real consciousness and bliss are used to denote Saççidānandagunās in common use in devotional literature and most comprehensive of all. This made the crystalline form signifying power; consciousness, and blissful reality.[11]

The earliest of the creation theory is from Bṛhadāranyaka, which says in the beginning of the world there was Puruṣa alone. Then it is further explained as the universe in terms of a magnified man. In all natural phenomena, space became the first principle in the initial attempt towards abstract thought. Verily, the original thought was that all things arise out of space and disappear into it. Later came the doctrine of the imperishable and the fact that Brahman is the Supreme reality. We have seen that the creation theory speaks of the first cause as ātman who existed in the form of the Puruṣa and fancied himself in creating the world. Ātman shaped the Puruṣa drew Him from the water. From his mouth came fire, air from the nostrils, the sun from the eyes and the heaven from the ears. From his heart came the moon. In creating man, the deity commissioned the various external elements of the world. This was the Ṛg Vedic idea of cosmic Puruṣa. What is noticeable as we pass from the earlier Upaniṣads to the later ones is the fact that Brahman is quite different from the universe and therefore unknown. He is seen only by men of supreme and subtle intellect. He is free from evil, ageless, deathless and he is beyond hunger and thirst. Thus from a stage of speculation He came to be regarded as possessing many transcendental qualities of perfection.

The early cosmogenics believed that Brahman, Ātman or Puruṣa alone existed in the beginning, who then created the world out of himself and also the universe with all its diversity.[12]

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11. Kṛṣṇa Bharadwaj - The philosophy of Ramanuja,chap.6,p.135

The idea, was that the Brahman in relation to the diversity of this universe must be conceived as a unity in diversity. Thus He became the all pervasive soul of the universe. The predominent thought of the Upaniṣad regarding the relation of the Brahman to the material universe is that the latter in all its diversity is real and exists within Him. If He is the soul, the universe is His body. He controls the universe from within to undertake all the activities of the individual. Consequently, the most important thing recurring throughout the Upaniṣads is that through knowledge alone can one realise the Brahman.

Besides knowledge, the Upaniṣads recommend yogic discipline for overcoming consciousness of the self so as to become one with the Brahman. Thus we come to the conclusion that the predominent thought of the Upaniṣad regarding the relation of the supreme being to the self is that He exists in the embodied individual as its principle of consciousness.

THE DEITY OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

The Gītā speaks of the Brahman as the imperishable, referring to Him as Vasudeva Kṛṣṇa. Its unique attribute lies in the thought that the supreme being is Kṛṣṇa and there is none equal to this deity. Assuming that the world is real, the Gītā envisages it to be a part of the supreme being created and dissolved by Him.[13] Though in his transcendental aspect, He is alone, He is revealed in His religion to the universe as the supreme self. All this exists as part of Him.Though pervading in all these things, He does not share in their evil nature, but on the contrary is characterised by grace. Nothing delights him so much as mankind's whole-hearted devotion. His Grace extends even to the most undeserving people, so that they may go to Him promptly and be freed from their sins. He finally takes them unto Himself.

A brief history of Vaiṣṇavism and Ṣri Vaiṣṇavism will not be out of place in this context. It is regarded as one of the most important religions of India, extolled through the ages as a faith of redemption. Its followers worship Viṣṇu as the supreme God. He is represented in the Vedic mantras as one of solar deities associated with light and life. He bestows abundant riches upon his devotees. The words "Vasudha", "Svastikṛt" and "Sukhada" are applied to Him. Vaiṣṇavism is the Bhakti cult, which

12. Svetasvatara Upaniṣad.
13. Bharatan Kumarappa - The Hindu conception of the deity,London,1934,p.61

recognises Viṣṇu as "Puruṣottama". In the Brāhmanas, Viṣṇu attains a significant place. The Satapatha Brāhmana describes Him as a personification of sacrifice. The rise of Sri Kṛṣṇa, preacher of the Gītā, assumed a different complexion in the form of the Bhāgavata religion. Thus the God of Vaiṣṇavism became personal in nature. Kṛṣṇa was deified and identified with Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa. The new religion no doubt came as a reaction against the Vedic sacrifices. It insists that God is not a detached spectator of the world, but He is a participant in its affairs. Whenever the need arises, He incarnates Himself in a tangible form to save the world so that it could continue its spiritual evolution.

Viṣṇu as already noted, attained the position of prominence in the later Vedic period. The Satapatha Brāhmana refers to Him as the personification of sacrifice and the Aitreya Brāhmana says that He is the son of Dharma. The word Parama Vaiṣṇava was in use. Since the 5th century A.D. the supreme god as referred in the Gītā is Śri Kṛṣṇa preacher of the theistic faith. The Vedic cult of Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa slowly merged with the Bhāgavata cult which enabled the Brahman to become more personal. In due couse of time Kṛṣṇa was deified and recognised as Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa. Viaṣnavism is mono theistic but allows assumptions of different forms of Viṣṇu. Thus we see the worship of Kṛṣṇa was assimilated into the Vaiṣṇava creed. The bliss of God's presence is the ultimate object of all forms of Vaiṣṇavism.

Between the 7th and the 10th centuries, a great religious revival occured to eradicate the influence of Buddhist and Jaina doctrines. In the 8th century there was a revival of Vaiṣṇavism which advocated bhakti (devotion) and surrender (prapatti). The emergence of the Vaiṣṇava Ālvārs and the triumphant disputations against heresy and the organisations promoting these tenets made this movement very popular.

During this age in religion the importance of sacrifice declined and more emphasis was placed on faith and inner purity rather than mere ritual. The Brāhmanas not only contained in them the germ of the Vedānta philosophy, but foreshadowed the bhakti cult, too. Due credit should be given to the Brāhmanas which created a transition period from the Vedic age to that of the Upaniṣads, from ritual to knowledge, from Gods to a Godhead and from the many to the one. All the different religions of the world have evolved themselves in due course of time. Likewise Vaiṣṇavism of the South has had a tremendous growth till today. The Vedas are the fundamental edifices of our religion from which

emanate the smṛtis and the purāṇas. With the spread of scientific education the evidences which the Vedas provide, claim that the world was created and destroyed – as and when it became necessary. For the religious fervour, historical knowledge is not necessary. The God immanent is above all this. The Vedic sacrifices were replaced by a religion based on gnāna. To learn the history of Vaiṣṇavism, three different classes of people have helped. They are the poets, philosophers and religious teachers. The word Vaiṣ is found in the Vedas which assert the fact that Viṣṇu is the all powerful prevailing God. "The indefiniable alone is bliss" is echoed by the Upaniṣads. Thus man began his probe. Western thinkers arrived at the view that there will always be metaphysics in this world and man will shape it according to his vision, for his vision stretches beyond spatial, and temporal limits. Thus we may say that religious experience is as simple as a smile. Man created an intimacy with his God in his day to day experiences. Religion thus became the means for the realisation of the highest value.

The most important characteristic of Viashnavism is its adoption of bhakti for salvation. Direct communion is sought between the devotee and his God, either by gnāna or karma.

Vaiṣṇavism discards animal sacrifices and emphasizes on non-violence. According to Vaiṣṇava theology, God manifests Himself in five forms and has six attributes. Bhakti, according to its savant, is both philosophical knowledge and religious feeling. The credit of admitting the pançamas into its fold goes to Śrivaiṣṇavism alone. To eradicate the influence of Buddhism, a new movement revivalist in nature came as a reaction to Vedic exclusiveness, Jaina asceticism and Buddhist moralism. This period witnessed a change in the colour of the religion. Idol worship and chanting of devotional compositions in turn increased its influence enormously impelling many Jainas to embrace Hinduism. The emergence of Ālvārs, their deep faith and the establishment of mathās made Vaiṣṇavism a widely popular religion.

The twelve Ālvārs were known to go into raptures while chanting their songs. They could see God in everything, and believed in the fact that the soul cannot find its root until it finds its God. In the course of the movement, the orthodox school of bhakti was interpreted in simple local language. Ālvārs contacted God in his aprākṛita form and sang His primal beauty to communicate to mankind. It is this element which brought the

Ālvārs a growing popularity among the people. This simple process was precisely the need of the hour. The necessity for inner purity and personal experience disseminated spiritual knowledge without distinction of caste, creed or colour. This revitalised Hinduism. They preached that the highest end of life is bhakti here and now and man's responsibility is to respond to the love of God. Hinduism was referred to exist in the domain of the philosophy of a few but as the religion of many. Ālvārs invigourated it to perpetuate a philosophy of religion. This madness of divine love is Bhakti's pride. The devotee aspires only for complete dedication (surrender) to God who accepts even those who are steeped in sin, provided he surrenders to Him. By entering the heart of the bhakta He wipes out his sins. The consequence was that God became the centre of the town and the village. With the mangalāśāsanam of the Ālvārs, the existing temples grew in strength reviving religion and taking it to the masses.

The Ālvārs' was the age of intuition leading to a renaissance. This was followed by the age of reason, when the emphasis shifted to rationalism. Meditation and worship of the supreme being was thought to be possible only when He was endowed with form. That form is full of significance. The spirit of tolerance marked the religion of the age and became a prominent characteristic. Views and counterviews were expressed in a friendly atmosphere without rancour. The concept of the deity had emerged during the Vedic times which the Upaniṣads reiterated as one Brahman from whcih all proceed and to which all return. This idea is continued through the age of reason as well. Historically we may say that the Vaiṣṇava faith made great strides under the patronage of the Gupta Kings as well as several other ruling dynasties.

The evolution of the temple goes back to the Maurya Empire. Megasthanes gives a note of the different temples around Mathurā. But in these temples due to different invasions ostentatious festivals could not be celebrated. Whereas in the south the greatness of Viṣṇu has been propagated during the sañgam period and also by the Ālvārs and subsequently by the açārya parampara which developed into the spectacular vision of Viśiṣṭādvaita. The admixture of the Vedas, Vedic ideals, the eclectic poetry of the Ālvārs and the tenets of the Āgamas have resulted in a flawless cult in the south. Thereby, philosophy and religion have blended as a fine culture. In the poetry of the

Ālvārs, temple worship and bhakti are inter dependent. It is the Vibhava aspect that the Ālvārs have been singing of. The later acharyas mixed the bhakti element of the Ālvārs with philosophy.

The Gupta period marks the propositions of the Purāṇic faith and patronised construction of temples for Viṣṇu and Lakṣmi. Early Vaiṣṇavism was a development of Bhāgvatism, the cult of Bhagavat Nārāyaṇa, which became one of the most influential religions of the Gupta age. The society was based on varna organisation, the community was essentially agrarian. In the early centuries of the Christian era Pāñçarātra and Bhāgvata must bave emerged as two different sects of Vaiṣṇavas. The Pāñçarātra clung to ancient rituals and practices, but there are evidences of Brāhmanical ideological infiltration during the Gupta period, when Brāhmanism succeeded in adoring Vedic Viṣṇu and blending Bhāgvatism into a neo Vaiṣṇavism, the Pāñcarātra finally becoming an esoteric sect of the Vaiṣṇvas. It appears that Sañkarṣana and Vāsudeva were popular in the 4th century B.C. Both Megasthenes and Kautilya refer to them. But later Vāsudeva was completely identified with Nārāyaṇa, making Him the most popular incarnation. It is an interesting fact that popular cults were transformed into Vaiṣṇavism to maintain the caste base of the society. In its formative period, the Purānic Vaiṣṇavism must have brought together some non conformist elements superimposed by the brāhmanical social structure and made a break from the Vedic fire ritual. Under the Gupta patronage, Vaiṣṇavism reached the climax of popularity. During this period, Śri or Lakṣmi must have been adopted and united with Viṣṇu. There are ample epigraphic evidences to prove this. An inscription of 423 A.D. states that Mayurākṣaka, a feudatory of King Visvavarman, built temples, one for Viṣṇu and the other for the Divine Mother. The epigraphs of the Guptā period in Mandasaur refer to the cult of Viṣṇu, some examples of which are Saṃṅgi and Viṣṇu Chakrapāni.

The social context of the Bhāgavata Purana is the popular Bhakti movement of Ālvārs and Nāyanmārs. In their historic role of leading a Bhakti movement acceptable within the Vedic and Brāhmanical ideals, they took a reformist path. To sum up, religious worship is the inexhaustible repository of all transcendental powers. In turn the same power excites wonder, fear, joy and admiration and religion becomes a theism - a system of thought. Now it becomes evident that a personal God can be the object of worship and, therefore, theism is distinguished for

absoluteness of God. Man elevates himself when his objective activities are reverence and admiration.

Tradition, on the other hand, becomes the collective wisdom of mankind. The temple is the sublimated expression of a society's desire for togetherness. It is a product of art and is closely interwoven with aesthetics. The consecrated idol is the source from which love, succour and knowledge flow. By housing the idol the temple becomes the instrument which fosters these attributes of the Lord. The layman to whom this purpose remains unrevealed, seeks out a specified significance in the temple. He looks upon it as an object which represents the constancy of faith whether it nestles in the solid immovability of mountains like the Himālayas or on the banks of an everflowing dynamic river like the Gangā.

The worship of Sri Kṛṣna was assimilated into the Vaiṣṇava creed. The third and the most important characteristic of Vaiṣṇavism is its adoption of bhakti as the way to attain salvation. Hinduism lays great emphasis on non-violence (Ahimsa) as the highest virtue. Vaiṣṇavism also discarded animal sacrifice. The Mahābhārata speaking of the glory of Vaiṣṇavism refers to the performance of Aṣvamedha sacrifice where no animal was slaughtered. To realise God, who is satya, 'ahimsa' as the sole way is stressed.

Another special feature by which Vaiṣṇavism has distinguished itself from the other sects is the distinction it makes between God and the individual soul and the world of which He is the author. In Vaiṣṇava theology, God manifests Himself in five forms. the first is 'Parā' or Transcendental. The second form of manifestation consists of 'Vyuhāṣ'. The third form is the ten 'avatāras'. The fourth is the 'Antaryāmin' (The immanent), while the fifth is the 'Arca' (Idol). God as transcendent is said to possess six attributes such as jñāna, lordship (aiswarya), sakti, bala, virya and splendour (tejas).

The bliss of the God's presence is the ultimate object of all forms of Vaiṣṇavism. As to the question whether any effect on the part of the devotee is necessary for reaching the goal there is no common opinion among the Vaiṣṇavas themselves. But they are unanimous in admitting that without God's grace (anugraha) the goal cannot be reached. God's grace is natural (svābhāvika) and unconditional (nirhetuka). The soul wins the grace of God by loving devotion. The realisation of God is selfless, subtle,

unbroken and everlasting. Moreover, Vaiṣṇavism developed an intellectual and psychological aspect. Bhakti is more than intellectual love of God and it includes philosophic knowledge and religious feeling. Another remarkable credit of Srivaiṣṇavism is to have brought the Sūdrās and the untouchables into its fold.

Ālvārs signify a tremendous push to early Vaiṣṇavism. Their collected works is known as the "Sacred Four Thousand". They pour out intense, devoted love for Viṣṇu, which paved the way for the later "prapatti". As texts the compositions of the Ālvārs are the best to understand what devotion to Viṣṇu should be like. Devoid of abstruse arguments, these compositions make a direct appeal to people to worship Viṣṇu whose forms, particularly of the arça kind, get special treatment. It was Nāthamuni who resuscitated the four thousand hymns and preached them among the Vaiṣṇavas and made it an obligatory duty to recite these hymns in temples.

The Guruparamparās were written by eminent authors who flourished long after the açāryas, but contained full knowledge of them. In fact, they have glorified their achievements. Some others have done a regular study of the works of the masters which provide a scope to learn what the āçāryas stood for. Eminent among them are the later Āçārya Deśika and Maṇavāla Māmuni. Nāthamuni the first of the Srivaisnava preceptors, after the pilgrimage to the hallowed places of the North came to know about the rituals given to the Tamil hymns of the Ālvārs. The Prapannāmrita says that at Kumbhakonam the study of these hymns was considered damaging to Vedic orthodoxy. There are several accounts of the manner in which the texts were saved. Madhurakavi, pupil of Nammālvar, transmitted his master's work to Nāthamuni, though the hymns had no official sanction to be sung in the temples still they were popular among the people. Nāthamuni incorporated these scriptures henceforth known as the Drāvida Veda, in the temple worship at Śrirangam. This effected a revolution raising the status of the Prabandhas, the soul stirring songs and inspired popular movements as offshoots of the Brahmanical religion.

Nāthamuni lived upto the age of 96. He was succeeded by Uyyakkondar, who in turn was succeeded by Maṇakkāl Nambi - Yāmuna's teachers. Yamuna showed early signs of great knowledge, excelled himself in a debate against Akkiālvan in the Çōla Court and was rewarded with half the kingdom and the title of "Ālavandār". He led a luxurious life until Maṇakkāl Nambi

handed over to him the great treasure lying at the Śrirangam shrine which opened his eyes for spiritual pursuits. As the grandson and spiritual successor of Nāthamuni, Yāmuna had the privilege of inheriting his immeasurable spiritual wealth, a legacy enriched further and passed on to Rāmānuja. Yāmuna was endowed with a matchless erudition in Vedāntic studies. In his exposition of Viśiṣṭādvaitic thought, he follows the lead given by the ancient masters as Bodhāyana, Tanka and Dramiḍa. Probably, Nāthamuni's masterpiece "Nyāyatattva" greatly influenced him. In fact, Sri Vedānta Deśika, a post Rāmānuja preceptor, held the view that Yamuna's "Ātmasiddhi" is a brief version of "Nyāyatattva". He insists in his works on a high standard of thought and discussion. "Siddhi Traya" gives us a clear idea of the author's views on important philosophical problems. Even Rāmānuja quotes profusely from these splendid manuals in his "Śrībhāṣya". In thirty two stanzas he sums up the teaching of the Lord's songs in his "Gītārtha Saṅgraha". The "Stotraratna" and the "Çatuśloki" are replete with the philosophy of Nammālwār stressing on Prapatti or self surrender for attaining transcendental felicity.

"Āgamaprāmāṇya" is devoted in vindicating the authority of the Pāñcarātra. Yāmuna sets out to prove by scriptures and logic that the text of the Pāñcarātra has an authority equivalent to the Vedas. We may even say that he was not content to continue the temple service as a routine at Śrirangam, but was apostolic in his fervour to persuade orthodoxy not only of the existence but the truth of a complete Vaiṣṇava theology. He gave Vedānta a new scope. His intention was to bring within the Vedānta tradition a body of religious literature which was denied its due. He restored to the Vedānta the religious inspiration, which the philosophers of the monistic school did not comply with. His "Āgamaprāmāṇya" is a plea for the emancipation of popular religion. A study of the contents of the works of Yāmuna shows his greatness as the unquestioned leader of Vaiṣṇavism. He is equally at home in all areas of argument and establishment of his views as much as his expression of love for God in his impassioned verses. This blend of championship for the cause of Vaiṣṇavism and elegant versification is an exceptional gift with Yāmuna. If Nāthamuni laid the foundation for Vaiṣṇavism, Yāmuna prepared the basement for Rāmānuja to build the edifice of Viśiṣṭādvaita.

In "Stotraratnam", Yāmuna describes the beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa and confesses to Him the deep affliction of all his sins and guilt, frailities and vices and asks for His forgiveness. He narrates his own complete surrender and entire dependence on the Lord. If the sinner is not saved, the mercy of the Lord becomes meaningless. The devotee cannot bear any delay in his communion with the Lord. The fundamental note in these hymns is total surrender. After reading these hymns, Rāmānuja must have become so deeply attracted to Yāmuna. It is related in the "Prapannāmṛita" that Yāmuna was anxious to meet Rāmānuja but the latter was only able to pay his last homage to the mortal remains of Yāmuna. The rest of the history is interwoven with the life of Rāmānuja.

EVOLUTION OF THE TEMPLE

Tamil works of the Sañgam period proclaim the popularity of Viṣṇu worship in the Tamil country. the "Tolkāppiam" mentions Mayon (Viṣṇu) as the guardian deity of the forest land. Even the "Puranānūru" mentions Viṣṇu as one of the four principal Gods. Śilappadikāram makes reference to Venkadam, Arangam, Tirumālirunjolai as Viṣṇu temples.

The Viṣṇu temple at Kānçi was well known in the Sañgam period. The rest of the Tamil works 'Perumpānārrupadai' and 'Paditruppattu' talk of the reclining Viṣṇu. Many temples in the south must have come into prominence in the wake of the bhakti movement propagated by Ālvārs, sometime between the sixth and the eighth century A.D.. The idol manifestations or the Arçāvatāra gave fresh impetus to the growth of Viṣṇu worship in the tamil country. The holy places were termed as "Divyadesas".

The earlier Poigai Ālvār mentions Viṣṇu in four places in different postures. Tirumangai Ālvār has sung with great ecstacy on the Lord of Kāñçi. The sources for a study of Vaiṣṇava temples may be mainly literary for the period upto A.D. 600. The earliest are the Sañgam literature. (I to III century A.D.). The "Eṭṭuttogai" and the "Pattuppāttu" are systematic anthologies. Two major sections in the second show the epic and puranic influences, while the earlier one is devoid of secular influences and reveals a more tribal basis. Works like the 'Silappadikaram' and 'Manimekalai' throw considerable light on the socio-religious history of the time before 600 A.D. One of the works of this

period describes Viṣṇu as the supreme God which description follows closely those found in the Pāñcarātra texts. The Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata proclaims Viṣṇu as the cosmic Puruṣa, the creator par excellence. The Vyuhās and the Vibhavās and His immanence are also mentioned there. The invocatory verse of the Eṭṭuttogai closely resembles the Viṣṇu Sahasranāma. the "Silappadikāram" deals with the worship of Nārāyaṇa and devotes a chapter to the greatness of avatāra theory. Artistic remains of this period are unknown and hence we have to look only to the literary sources down to the period of Pallava and Pāṇdya ascendency in the South in 6th century A.D., which reveal the existence of temples. Prior to the use of stone, religious monuments were built of brick, mortar and timber. (1) Viçitraçitta claims that he had dedicated a temple for the Trinity[14]. The sudden outburst in the 7th century A.D. of building activity resulted in edifices of monolithic and structural types, e.g., rock cut reliefs depicting purāṇic themes. Even Sanskrit works of secular nature, e.g., Daṇdin's 'Avanti Sundari Katha' throws light on the religious background of those times providing some basis for different concepts. During the period 600 to 1000 .A.D, major concepts were evolved by way of sculptural representation of the chief deities of the Hindu pantheon. The evolution of the Vaiṣṇava pantheon is the result of the merging of three currents of theistic development (1) Viṣṇu (2) Nārāyaṇa mentioned in the Araṇyakas and Brāhmanas and (3) Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa.

THE VAIṢṆAVA TEMPLE

The temple in Tamil Nadu is an institution of prehistoric activity and has had a continuity of existence all along. It has played a prominent part both in history and religion, and also the social and cultural spheres of the people. it chief characteristic is based on the two aspects of monothism and icon worship. It has been referred to even in the 'Tolkappiam'.

The Tirumurugārruppadāi a long sangam poem, praises Lord Muruga and gives full details of His worship. According to Suvira Jaiswal, the Vaiṣṇava religion revolves around the worship of the supreme God Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu and His numerous manifestations. The Mahābhārata and the Brahmānda Purāṇa identify Brahman

14. Mandagapattu inscription, from C.Sivaramamurti- Mahendravarman of Kanchi,India,vol-III.

with Nārāyaṇa. The Gṛhya - Sūtra describes Nārāyaṇa bali as a ritual with the rite of human sacrifice only being an offering to Nārāyaṇa, for those who die an unnatural death. The idea of a universal form (Virāt Rūpa) popularised by the Gītā must have been originally associated with Nārāyaṇa. The Gītā attributes the qualities of Nārāyaṇa to Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa. The Nārāyaṇiya sections of the Mahābhārata describe the devotee of Nārāyaṇa Vasudeva as Sāttvatas, Bhāgavatas, Pāñcarātras and Ekānties. The Pāñcarātra samhitās enjoin the worship of the Vyūha and of the incarnation. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa and Bhāgavata Purāṇa which are Bhāgavata scriptures eulogise the Vyuha and sanction of all forms of worship. It is again Jaiswal's view that the Pāñcarātra had prominent tāntric leanings and was popular with the lowest classes, whereas Bhāgavatism gained support of the ruling classes and championed the varṇa system. The Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva cult emerged from the Gītā period, where He is the preacher. The dedication of Garuḍadhvaja in honour of Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva is recorded in the Besnagar[15] inscriptions of 2nd century B.C. which indicate His identity with Viṣṇu. They speak of Vāsudeva as God of Gods (Deva Deva). The Viṣṇu Purāṇa says that He is the incarnate aspect of the Vedic God Viṣṇu and in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (6th century A.D.). He is recognised as Viṣṇu incarnate in all potency. This Vāsudeva cult had emerged in the Maratha country in 1st century B.C. and must have spread down south upto the Tamil country.[16] The Bhāgavata Purāṇa prophecies that in the Kali age there will be a large number of devotees hailing from the Dravida country where flows the Tāmraparani and Kāveri. This accounts for the Ālvārs who sang in ecstasy about the glory of Nārāyaṇa.

The new form of Viṣṇu worship that evolves through a process of syncretism with popular cult was founded on the doctrine of bhakti so distinguished from the Vedic phase, though the sentiments of bhakti are referred to in the Ṛgvedic hymns. The religious attitude of bhakti is traced to the worship of Nāgas and Gandharvas belonging to the pre-Āryan substratum. In the Gītā, bhakti is pure affection for the highest being.

Although the Lord has the whole world within, He is inconceivable. He also has an adorable form with which the devotee experiences a close intimacy. In this experience the

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15. Suvira Jaiswal - Origin and development of Vaisnavism,pp.36,46,73.
16. R.G.Bhandarkar - Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism in minor religious systems,p.48.

devotee is fully conscious of the God's transcendence and majesty and craves for His indulgences.

The tendency towards erotic mystcism in the Bhāgavata concept of bhakti must be identified with the period of Harivamsa and Viṣṇu Purāṇa. This bhakti, with the intense love of a God, who fulfils the desire of the devotees, thrived in the age of Ālvārs, when Vaiṣṇavism reached the masses and became popular. The theory of incarnation, a fundamental Vaiṣṇava doctrine, evolved with the identification of Bhāgavat Nārāyaṇa with Vasudeva Kṛṣṇa, who was looked upon as the human incarnation of the former. This concept has reference in the Ṛgveda as Viṣṇu assuming another form in the battle. The Gītā clearly states that the Godhead incarnates with a definite purpose[17]. The term avatāra implies the intrinsic superiority of Nārāyaṇa Viṣṇu. In short, this doctrine, though brāhmanical, became the reconciliatory attitude of Vaiṣṇavism, which created a kind of cultural unity.[18]

Similarly as diverse elements went to form a coherent order, the rituals of the day also related to the ceremony of idol worship. Image worship is of pre-Aryan origin. But the mode of worhsip in the cult of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa appears to have been idolatary. It is a historical fact that Sāttvatas are described as living on image worship and were ranked low, because they degraded religious devotion (bhakti).

The Purāṇas state that there are two modes of worship Vedic and Tāntric. The first mode requires the recitation of Vedic mantras. It is also considered that these Vedic mantras are a super imposition upon an extraneous ritual. The Viṣṇu Dharmottara Purāṇa says[19] that the Gods were visible in their physical forms in the Satya, Tretā and Dvāpara Yugas. But with the advent of Kaliyuga, they could be seen only in the images. This made the idolatarous rites getting harmonised with Vedic tradition and practices.

The Pāñcarātra cult had retained many elements of Nārāyaṇa worship. Its works are reproductions of similar ancient manuals with additions and alterations. The 'Viṣṇuśruti'[20] gives the earliest descriptions of the puja, which consists of invocation,

17. Ṛgveda 7,100 - 6.
18. Bhāgavat - Purāṇa - Vol.4.5.8
19. S.Jaiswal - ibid p.147.
20. S.Jaiswal - ibid p.157.

offering, bathing, decoration with garments, ornaments and lamp, along with the recitation of Vedic mantras and even betel leaves. The Tāntric form was open to all creeds, sex and age. 'Jayākhya Samhita', though recognising the superiority of the Brāhman allows the other Varṇas to initiate members of their own and of lower castes. Thus we find that the Pāñcarātra initiation is tantric and it developed in a society where women enjoyed a high status. Even in the Rāmāyaṇa, Kausalyā worshipped Janārdana by performing the yogic exercise Prāṇāyāma. Sources indicate that Vaiṣṇava icons were worshipped on a communal, family and individual basis. Music and dance formed an important aspect of temple worship and offering of dance and songs were also made. 'Jayākhya Samhita' tells us about installation of the image in a temple, the Pāñcarātra texts repeatedly mention that the Pançarātri should be a performer of 'Paṇcakāla' five acts of worship performed during a day divided into five parts. These five are as follows - Abhigamana (approaching the temple with oneness of mind on the deity), Upādānam (getting material for worship), Ijya (the performance of worship), Svādhyāya (medidation, study and discovery) and finally the performance of Yoga. The samhitas also recommend branding of Viṣṇu's weapons, the Çakra and the Śañkha on the arms of the initiate.

There is ample literary evidence for the existence of temples and images in different media. The Pallava remains of the subsequent centuries (7th and 9th) century A.D. can be cited as illustrating the stage of the iconographic development reaching its zenith[21]. The periods from A.D. 600 to 1000 is partly rich in sources for the Vaiṣṇava iconography. In the Tamil country, the major concepts were evolved during the period. Subsequent development has been going on since then. Nāthamuni, the first among the Śri Vaiṣṇava preceptors, introduced the theory of Tattvatraya, the three main principles namely matter, sentient and Isvara. Yāmuna propagated the principles of Pāñcarātra Āgama all over the Tamil country. However later, Rāmānuja demonstrated the relation between the Brahman, the soul and the world at the spiritual level. At the practical level he organised idol worship both in theory and practice. He does not denounce the material world in preference to God. The huge material world

21. Champakalakshmi - Vaiṣnava Iconography in the Tamil country.

thoroughly enjoyable with all its pleasantness stands before us; when included with the Brahman it is more enjoyable.

Otto Von Shrader in his introduction to the Ahirbudhnya Samhita gives details of two hundred samhitas in Pāñcarātra; the thoughts of which spread from philosophy, theology, yoga, ārādhana, pūja and devotion to the arça, mañtra, yañtra etc.. Ritual contents predominate philosophical and cosmological ones which must have formed the cumulative growth of many centuries. As these samhitas were compiled, many south Indian temples like Śrirangam, Yādavagiri were mentioned.

The time honoured worship of icons is used by the Pāñçarātrikas with their own imagination on Āgamic Pūjās and Śilpa Śāstra. The latter cannot create a temple, but they help in the details of construction, expanding from a sanctum sanctorum to sapta prākaras and big gopurams. The expansion of rituals attracted the masses. Simple mantras were converted into big dhyāna ślokas. Individual Āgama way of worship for salvation was converted into mass media to achieve the same results. The relationship between Vaiṣṇavism of later period with Āgama is very interesting. Ālvārs might not have been conversant with the Āgama system. But they essentially believed in the icon.

The Avatara theory reflected a variety of religious activities. This concept provided an easy means of bringing into the ever expanding Hindu pantheon[22] all new extracts of Viṣṇu worship. This includes even the Ālvārs deified as divine weapons of the Lord. So, for the Yogi as well as the common man the icon is more than a symbol, it is a divine embodiment. The five forms of Viṣṇu were equated into the five bheras (icons) in the temple. Thus the Āgamas provided corporeal iconographic forms for different purposes in the temple rituals.

22. Champakalakshmi - ibid

THE PĀÑÇARĀTRA ĀGAMA

It is generally believed that there is an undercurrent of misery running beneath the flow of the Vedic seers' optimism. Offerings were given to avoid the wrath of the deities. Thus probably the performance of the sacred duties formed part of man's life. The study of the Vedas was reserved only for members of the higher caste. To fulfil the aspirations of the other sections of the people the Āgamas must have come into existence. They are certainly later in origin than the Vedas; as storehouses of knowledge of the ultimate reality, they are also a class of religious scriptures which deal with rituals and modes of worship in temples as well as at homes.

The Āgamas which arose initially as creeds based on philosophical tenets of the Vedas got split into three divisions namely Śākta, Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava. The latter Āgama also branched out into Vaikhānasa and Pāñcarātra. Two aspects are noteworthy in these Āgamas. One is Viṣṇu's eminent position and the other the worship of Viṣṇu in the form of idols enshrined in temples for the construction of which elaborate architectural guidelines are provided.

The Vaikhānasa Āgama gets its name from a sage called Vikhanas who preached the worship of Viṣṇu to his pupils. The four disciples were Bhṛgu, Kasyapa, Atri and Marici who composed works known by their names - on what they were taught by Vikhanas, wherein details for the selection of materials for building temples, idols and daily offering of worship are given in detail. Vikhanas wrote the Dharma, Gṛhya Sūtra and Sulvasūtra and those who follow them were known as Vaikhānasas and were the only persons qualified for attending to the worship of the deity, and others, who were not born as Vaikhānasas, were ineligible to do so. Here Vedic mantras were used for every ritualistic act. Alongwith Viṣṇu, who is called Ādimūrti, Açyuta, Anañta, Satya and Aniruddha are also recognised. It is said that these are only created forms of Viṣṇu, like the shape of the written characters (lipi). The results of idol worship are considered equal to agnihotra for those who do not

perform it and allround prosperity for those who do. The works state the nature of reality in a causal manner. Vedic mantras alone are prescribed in these texts, for every ritual; in addition, mantras are cited from the mañtrapraśna of the Vaikhānasas.

The Pāñcarātra Āgama dealing with the worship of Gods in temples and houses also treats subjects of philosophy, mañtra (linguistic occultism) and Yantra (theory of mystical diagrams). The name Pāñcarātra is explained in several ways. Various meanings are ascribed to it. Pāñcarātra includes all the four Vedas and the Sañkhya Yoga.[1] The Iswara Samhita[2] holds that Nārāyaṇa taught the Pāñcarātra to Śāñḍilya, Anupagayaṇa, Maunjāyana, Kausika and Bhaṛdvaja, therefore it was called so. Schrader says that the name Pāñcarātra is derived from its having been heard in course of five nights by Ananta (serpent), Garuḍa, Viśvaksena, Śiva and Brahma.[3] The word rātra is taken to mean knowledge in its five fold character -the transcendent reality (Paramātman), redemption (Mukti), enjoyment (Bhakti) concentration (Yoga), and sense objects (Samsara). As this śastra treats all of these five subjects, it is called Pāñcarātra.

The Brāhmaṇas say that Pāñcarātra was a sacrifice performed by the Purusa or Nārāyaṇa over a period of five rātris. These five nights of the individual soul are the five qualities of the primary elements, the subtle elements, individualism, thought and the unmanifest. The Sastra discusses the union and dysfunction of these five principles with the self. Therefore it is Pāñcarātra.[4]

Another interpretation justifies the name on the ground that the Lord's forms are five namely, Para, Vyūha, Vibhava, Añtaryamin and Arça which are treated here. The division of the day's routine into five namely, Abhigamana, Upādāna, Ijya, Svādhyāya and Yoga also gives the name. The texts of this Āgama end with the word 'Samhita' which suggests their Vedic origin. The total number of Pāñcarātra texts is about 225. They are classified as Divya, Munibhāṣita and Manuṣabhāṣita. Sattvata Pauskara and Jaya belong to the first category and are known as Ratnatraya. Iswara, Pāramesvara, Bhaṛdvaja and Padma come under the second. The three probably were compared by ordinary but authentic persons. They are classified as Mañtra Āgama,

1. Mahabharata - Śāñtiparva, 339-11-12
2. Īśvara Saṁhita - Chapter XXI
3. Otto von Schrader - Introduction to Pāñçarātra, pp.22.26
4. Parama Saṁhita - 1, 39-40

Tañtra and Tañtrāntama. Those who followed the Pāñcarātra tradition were called by several names as Bhāgavata, Sāttvata, Ekāntin and Paramaikāntin.

The cult of Pāñcarātra is well developed in the Nārāyaṇīya section of Moksadharma in the Santiparva of Mahābhārata. This is attested by the Besnagar inscriptions and other places where some temples were constructed for the worship of Vāsudeva Sankarṣana and others.[5]

The Āgamic mode of worship has to be traced to the beginning of the Christian Era if not earlier and its assimilation should have been gradual and fully established before 600 A.D.Pāñcarātra must have originated in the north and subsequently spread to the south. The composition of the Samhitas did not necessarily cease in the north having just begun in the south. This cult has been practised in the Marāṭhā country[6] as early as the 1st century before Christ, according to Otto Schrader.[7]

The oldest work quoting the Pāñcarātra seems to be the Spanḍa Pradīpika of Utpala Vaiṣṇava, who lived in Kashmir in the 10th century, one generation before Yāmuna.

The ideal Pāñcarātra samhita is said to consist of four quarters – teaching (i) Jñāna - Knowledge (ii) Yoga - Concentration (iii) Kriya - Making (iv) Çaṛya - Doing. Jñāna is the knowledge of the ultimate reality - a development of the Brahmanas, srutis and Sankhya philosophy. Yoga is worship, Kriya concerns itself with the building of temples and making of images. Çaṛya stands for the method of worship. The two important aspects of the āgama are (a) sound letters which are its evolutes (b) the mañtras which are composed of the letters. The ultimate reality reveals itself in so many ways. The divine descents and images in temples are brought under the former. Āgmas have laid down the remarkable principle that everything at all itmes and places is spiritual and has no blemish attached to it. The sages were called Mañtra Driṣṭas - seers of mantras.

These mañtras protect one who contemplates or meditates upon them. Those sages must have been spiritually supreme; they meditated upon their aspects (not necessarily in the physical

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5. Dr. Varadacharya - Pāñçarātra and Vaiṣṇavism, p.239
6. Dr. R.D. Bhandarkar - p.4
7. Otto von Shrader - Literature of the Pāñaçrātra

form) of the deities, which appeared before them, evoking the rise of a sound reflex taking the shape of a mañtra. These were collected together. Hospitality, offerings and prayers constituted the process of worship which formed part of the Yajur Veda. Accent on the mode of singing,paved the way for the rise of the Sāma Veda. Man had to take measures for defence and this resulted in Atharva Veda.

This kind of religion must not have sprung out of the tribal culture, which had no concept of a Godhead. Spiritualism thus seems to have marked out sanātana dharma as distinct from all concepts of religion. As years rolled by, the Vedāngas - auxillaries of the Vedas, the Dharma Śāstras, epics, Purāṇas and the systems of philosophy came into being. The male members of the three upper castes were allowed to have the requisite qualification for the study of these subjects and their practice too. It is at this attitude of the higher castes that there must have arisen the Āgamic religion. Though based on the Vedas, its practices were non-Vedic. The portals for participation in rituals were thrown open to all without distinction of caste or sex. Tāñtrik mañtras were evolved from the Vedic mañtras by including the formers' syllables. Even women and śūdras, who were supposed to be ineligible for Vedic studies were initiated into this cult to attend the worship.

The ultimate reality is the Brahman, who is formless. He is the supreme deity propitiated in all rites and rituals laid down by scriptures. He grants the fruit. All the Upaniṣads declare that Mokṣa is the highest of all goals and Brahman is the only God who can grant salvation. Persons who adopt the Brahma Vidya must possess some qualification. The rest are given the other upāya, which goes by the concept Prapatti - surrender.

The Brahman has a divine form - Divya Mañgala Vigraha said to be the support of all twenty four tattvas. (Realities which are his own ornaments and weapons. There are five manifestations of His. They are as follows (i) Para Transcendent, (ii) Vyūha - Emanating (iii) Vibhava - the incarnating (iv) Antaryāmin, the immanent and (v) Arçāvatāra the form of the consecrated image.

Of these the Para Rūpa is Nārāyaṇa Himself called by various names as Parabrahman, Paramātma, Paramapuruṣa,

Vāsudeva etc., seated on the Ādiśeṣha with[8] His consorts in the celestial world of eternal splendour.

For the well-being of mankind the timeless reality is splitting itself into such forms. In His true transcendental character, God is Para of the remaining four, the Vyūha comes next. The very word Vyūha means splitting up. The Lord divides His different aspects from one another for the manifold graceful activities. This theory of the Vyūha is quite ancient. The Mahābhārata dwells at length on the Pāñçarātra (Satapatha Brāhmana[9] says that the Lord had performed the Pāñcarātra sacrifice). Patanjali's Mahābhāṣya speaks of the four fold aspect of the deity[10]. This theory apart from historical importance is padded with philosophical significance ; also Vyūha may be explained as the conditioning of the unconditioning Vasudeva. In Vyūha He divides Himself as Vāsudeva, Samkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. In Himself He is known as Para where his transcendence is described in terms of nirguṇa. But this aspect does not mean He has no attributes and is devoid of evil qualities, being the final synthesis of all contradictions. Moreover He possesses the six qualities like (Jñāna) - knowledge Lordship or unimpeded activity independent of all others (Aiśvarya) ability or potency to become the material cause of the world (Śakti) strength, absence of fatigue (Bala), virlity, changelessness (Vīrya) splendour, might, and the power to defeat others (tejas). All these six qualities have their own functions to perform. Bala or strength suggests the unceasing dynamism of the divine activity. Aiśvarya is symbolic of His force. He is the free agent seeking no external help in the creation of the world. Though being the material cause of the world, there is not the slightest diminution in God's nature. This is Vīrya. It is His capacity to create the world from out of Himself without undergoing any change in Himself. As a result of the divine will which is His creative energy, the Lord is conceived as projecting Himself into three manifestations or Vyūhas. They are Samkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. God's functions are exhibited on the metaphysical, psychological and temporal places. The Vyūhas are understood in the context of the first two. Each of these manifestions possesses two qualities for doing its specific work. Pradyumna

8. "For I am the enjoyer and also the Lord of all sacrifices- The divine serpent"
9. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa - XIII, 6.1, XII 13.4
10. Vidyarthi - Theism in Pāñçarātra, p.169

represents majesty (Aiśwarya and visibility). From the function of spontaneous agency (Aiśvarya) and the unaffectedness in spite of change (Vīrya) is generated the form of Pradyumna who gives instructions in śāstras. The Divine mission of preservation necessitates the possession in addition to the remaining four qualities those of power (Śakti) and splendour (tejas). Aniruddha is a manifestation in the divine work of preservation. In fact he awards the result of undertakings when knowledge and strength come to the forefront and when the cosmic destruction takes place. Samkarṣaṇa represents this aspect of God. The Vyūha's psychological aspect is as follows. They take the day-to-day charge of the cosmos, but also of the inner world of man.[11] In their psychological aspect these three rules, respectively, our mind (Manas), ego (Ahañkar) and the finite self (jiva). They are the personalities in the Divine, each accomplishing its own duty relating to the world. Each one of them is the resultant of the conglomerations of a pair of attributes.[12] Though the two attributes predominate in each Vyūha, yet all of them possess the six qualities of the Lord. Samkarṣaṇa superintends all individual souls and seperates them from Prakṛti. Pradyumna superintends the minds of all human beings and gives instructions for religious performances and is also responsible for the creation of human beings. As Aniruddha he protects the world and leads man to the attainment of wisdom. In short, they are in reality one and the same pure avatāras of Viṣṇu.[13]

The ultimate duty is ever associated with Śakti a sentient female principle. In Vaiṣṇavism God is conceived as reason, love and will. The Śakti aspect of the supreme lays emphasis on the world being the product of His will. Śakti is designated in the Pāñçarātra as Śri Padma, Svatañtra, Anañdi and so on. She signifies the dynamic aspect of God. She is one of his inseperable attributes and accounts for His supremacy in the creation of the World, though God does not need any external help for his functioning. There is nothing external which He manipulates for His creative activity. Śakti, like knowledge is doubly conceived. (Bhakti, Śakti and Kriya Śakti). Bhakti – Śakti indicates the will of the deity at the time of creation. Kriya Sakti indicates the creation's purpose lies in the making of souls. The entire world

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11. Sri Bhāṣya - 1.3.1
12. Dasgupta - Philosophy of Ahirbudhnya Saṁhita, p.37.
13. Dasgupta - Viśvakṣeṅa Saṁhita, Vara Varamuni's commentary on Lokācārya's Tattvatrayam.

is nothing but the play of the Divine energy into which it is dissolved during the time of world's dissolution.

Vibhava, the next form is the divine descent. Under pure creation are included the Vibhavas, which are called avatāras. All the descents spring from Aniruddha, though some texts declare different descents from different Vyūha forms. The admission of a body of God in the form of different avatāras is made up of six attributes. He is free from the products made up of matter with three gunas sattva, rajas and tamas which have no effect on Him. Though having taken the human form, He is free from any of the blemishes associated with the attributes of prakṛti. This is of ten kinds with the names Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and Kalki.

These are taken to punish the evil doer and protect the good to establish dharma. Vibhava is the manifestation of the Paramātman who descends as man, fish and tortoise living along with the humans, enjoying and suffering the same way. He comes of His free will for the world's redemption. Common men were not in the know of things and thus did not give the due honour - "Avajananti mūḍhāha. But the sages were lost in admiration and devotion towards the avataras. This is the concrete manifestation of Kṛipā (grace) to all species of humanity when evil seemed to triumph, over good, creating a crisis in human life. All these manifestations are also treated to be endowed with Sādguṇya. They are made of Śuddhasatva, a quality bereft of rajas and tamas; rather a distinctive element called pure sattva and never in union with rajas and tamas. Viṣṇu takes the Sakala form for the purposes of creation, protection and destruction of all beings. Śri or Lakṣmi, who is eternal and whose form is not manifested, belongs to Him. Her form is made up of primordial matter - Mūlaprakṛti. She is the cause of the Lord's actions, as well as symbolises wealth and prosperity. Tiru is a common occurrence in all Sangam works. She resides in Māl (Viṣṇu's) chest. The concept of Śri has its origin even in the Vedic lore. Next form of descent is the arça. It is the Vaiṣṇava belief in the manifestation of God in idols. A close study of ancient texts makes us believe that symbols were utilised for spiritual purposes. One such example is the mystic symbol 'OM', the cardinal emblem of the Lord. It represents the supreme deity in specific forms, it becomes a method of idolisation of the ultimate principle. In the Puruṣa Sūkta of the

Ṛg Veda, the Divine figure is conceived as being possessed of thousand arms, heads, feet etc..[14] The image of Sita in her absence during the Aśvamedha sacrifice in the Rāmānyaṇa is another example. Even Pāṇini mentions about idols of the Hindu gods and Goddesses. The Divine is all – pervasive and fulfills the desire of the devotee. The Lord confers His grace through the descent into the idol. The image is worshipped as the symbol of the Divine. The transcendent must be in communion within and this demand is met by positioning them in the image.

Viṣṇu is omnipotent and so can descend into the images made of metal or stone. In His Vibhavas, He gets down with a portion of His Śakti. He occupies the images which are consecrated and installed on the request of the suffering humanity, He.comes down in human form and when He has accomplished his job, He retires to His own abode. The case of Arça is slightly different. The devotee yearns for His vision and His presence before Him. For this sole purpose the Lord descends into the images and stays there for ever. This is technically called Arça; the body of god in this form is also non-material (aprākṛta). This figure is looked upon as non-material in its making, hence the idol becomes the seat of the auspicious form (Divyamañgala Vigraha) and His body is the resting place of the material products. In the Pāñcarātra Āgama, Lakṣmi holds a leading place alongwith Viṣṇu, she also descends with Him according to Pāñcarātra texts, which indicates that She is Śakti, ever present along with Viṣṇu in His Vyūha, Vibhava, Arça and Añtaryamin forms though assuming different names. Her forms also are not made of material products.

The next form is the Añtaryamin. The Lord is said to be the Inner Ruler[15] (Añtaryamin) of selves and is present in the heart of each of them. This concept is based on the Upaniṣads, which declare that Brahman is within every object and every self and controls them from within. But He is unsullied by the impurities of the physical frames within which the self rests from birth to death. By the growing conviction of God's inner rulership it is in turn consolidated and stabilised in the belief that this divinity is expressed adequately in the Divine incarnations. In short, the Pañcarātra religion has immense religious significance in the

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14 Puruṣa Sūkta - X.90

15 Taittrīya Araṇyaka - 11.11.5

matter of bringing about a marriage between God's transcendence and immanence.

Since the speculative character of the Upaniṣadic literature was confined mainly to the domain of the intellectual, the rest of the people must have felt the need for a personal God possessing all the attributes, worshipping and meditating on whom could result in the final emancipation of the soul. The element of Bhakti in the form of deep affection and devotion for a deity and towards its worship through Āgamic literature must have come into existence with its distinct doctrines of theology and philosophy. These Āgama texts contained materials to show how the concept of image came to be evolved while the Vedic rites enjoined upon the person the performance of Yāgas in the sacred fire, the Kalpasūtra directs the people to undertake japa of the mantras during the sacrifice. The practical problem one had to face in the yāga and japa is that in the former the deities' presence is invoked Āvāhana before the oblation. The deity is sent away (Visarjana) after the act is over. Besides, the deity's features are not noticed in the mantra except in the form of sacred souls. It is natural for the persons assembled to desire a form, a permanent one before them. A concrete form therefore was given in the form of a yantra, a piece of metal with lines drawn to resemble a flower. The letters which constitute the mantra are inscribed in the lines at spots specified by the rules laid down for that purpose. Thus the yantra becomes the deity when life is infused into it (Prāṇapratiṣta) by competent priests after performing hōma in the sacred fire. In the case of even those who had made distinct advance in the spiritual path by adopting the yantra, need arises for an evolved figure of concrete information, which would please the mind and senses of the aspirants.

The Vaiṣṇava Āgamas admit the Brahman as possessing all the attributes. The forms of worship prescribed by these Āgamas are prevalent in most of the south Indian temples.

The Āgamas[16] emphasise two aspects : one is that the sound and the letters which are its evolutes, mantras which are composed of the letters and impressions are all the constituents of reality; the second is Śakti, absolutely necessary for creation. Matter, universe and the individuals all form part of this. Through

16. Dr. V. Varadacharya - The Āgamas in South Indian Vaiṣṇavism

these two aspects the Āgamas proclaim that everything at all places and times is spiritual and there is no blemish attached to the Brahman. So the human body is also treated as pure to make itself eligible for offering worship.

The aspirant who is to offer worship to the deity should get intiated by one who is already doing service to God according to the Āgama of which he is the follower. Mañḍalas (pictorial representations) are made on the ground and metals where the descent of supreme consciousness is to be had. The syllables which are letters become the abodes of deities, when they are written in the yañtras, they take the form of a diagram carved on crystal, metal or stone. These syllables become the mañtras (different for different deities). These are no longer treated as material but as the body of the deity. The deity comes to live there and is worshipped. The letters of the particular mañtra are allotted to certain parts of the body. Thus the worshipper himslf becomes the abode of the deity. This is known as nyāsa. Then he transfers his power to the yañtra. This yañtra finally must have evolved as the deity. Before the act of worship (bhūtaśuddhi) - (purification of elements) is done. Mind is taken to the vital airs and the self is merged into the supreme self. During worship, various mañtra-gestures are made to the deity.

The earlier texts such as the Sattvata, Pauśkara, Jayākhya, Ahirbudhnya and Lakşmi Tañtra deal with the routine life divided into five parts as abhigamana, upādāna, ijya, svadhyāya and yoga. Abhigamana is offering worship in the early morning, upādāna is collection of materials needed for worship. Ijya is another word for Yoga or sacrifice. This is at par with the Vedic ritual. Svādhyaya is study and teaching of one's Veda. Yoga is getting united with the Lord. Special initiations and training are required to qualify for this worship.

The first step to initiation is Pañçasamskāra comprising of five acts. (i) Tapa which consisits in receiving from the Āçārya the marks on the shoulders by heated conch and discus. (ii) Punḍra, two vertical lines drawn with the sacred white mud and also a streak of red colour in the middle. (iii) Nāma, the name given to the disciple, to become the servant of God. (iv) Mañtra, the three mañtras, namely, the Aşţakşara, dvaya and çaramaśloka. (v) ijya, act of offering daily worship of God.

The arça form is required to be created out of specific materials. The image of god as Varāha paved the way for the

earth to be raised to the level of the Goddess Bhūdevi. She was placed to the left of Viṣṇu. Nīla, another aspect of Śakti also became a part of the Viṣṇu pantheon. The Āgama texts throw light on the following points. (i) the entire planning of the temple, (ii) the qualities of the Ācāryas knowing the merits and demerits of Śilpa Śāstra, to decide the quality of the site (Bhūparikṣa) and nature of the soil. Then came the nagara and gṛha nirmāṇa. The size of the temple and the image is determined, whether it is to be made of stone or wood is also decided.

This image is the jīva of the temple. Its measurements are determined proportionate to the size of the sanctum sanctorum as well as the gopuram - tower. The Āçarya should employ certain units calculated on some abstract principle. The terms used are tāla and angula. Tālamana is the major measure which can be divided by angula and angula by yasa. If Angula is one inch, it is the 12th of the tāla. An image of three feet height will be divided into ten units known as daśatala. Then the 10th part is divided into twelve units each being called angula. This knowledge helps the sculptor with precision to fashion an image and its parts symmetrically.

The tālamana is further divided into three groups - daśatāla,navatāla and aṣtatāla. The first one is used for major Gods like Viṣṇu and Siva. Navatāla is for Dévi bimbas and aṣtatāla for bhakta bimbas. The Āgamas give precise instructions on minute details.

The ground or site where the temple is to be erected is selected by the colour of the mud and availability of water - and the Vāstupuruṣa is to be initiated. The structure of the temple may vary according to the wherewithal of the yajamān. It should be such as to display the six path theory through its various portions. The corners or ramparts must have on them the image of a lion or Garuda. They should be ornate as well as symmetrical. The number of enclosures must be five[17]

The temple constructed is taken to represent the body of man. The sanctum sanctorum represents the head. The śukanāśi[18] which is next to it is the neck, the ardhamaṇḍapa represents the chest and shoulders, and the prākāras, the thighs and knees and the tower the feet. The significance lies in God's dwelling in the

17. Kaśyapa Śilpa Śāstra - Ch. 43
18. Śilpa Śāstra - XXXV.

devotee. The parts of the vimāna refer to the limbs of God who is enshrined in the sanctum (garbhagṛaha), ardhamaṇḍapa, maha snana, alankāra and sabha maṇḍapas represent the Mūlādhāra, Svadhiṣtana and other çakras in the body. The seven prākāras, the seven constituents (dhatu), fluid, blood, flesh, marrow, bone, sinew and virile fluid; or matter, intellect, ego, subtle elements, organs of sense etc.. The five prākaras represent anna, prāna, manas, vijnāna and āñañda. The three prākāras represent the self, matter and body. The dhvajasthamba is the pillar of dharma. It represents the Brahmanādi with Iḍa and Piṇgala on both sides.

The number of idols to be installed is generally five, each yielding different results. They are named as dhruva, utsava, bali, tīrtha and Śayana with snapana sometimes making the sixth[19]. They are known by other names as mula karma, nitya, mahottsava, snapana and taruṇālaya. Idols are to be of three kinds according to their postures. Standing, reclining or sitting in the first, second and third storeys respectively as in the temples at Tirukkottiyūr, Madurai, Uttiramerur and Paramesvara Vinnagaram at Kāñcipuram[20].

For the installation a hall known as yagyaśāla is built. The sacred fires called āhavanīya, anvānrārya, garhapatya, āvasthya and sabhya, kavyada, *vaidyuta* and bāḍaba are lit according to the respective deities. Mantras are prescribed for doing particular homas to individual deities. The idols are kept immersed in water or milk which process is known as adnivāsa. In the meanwhile, God's presence is invoked in jars filled with consecrated water. The idols are then taken out and carried behind the archakas who go in advance with the jars to the inner shrine where the dhruva or the mulabera is already installed. The idols are kept in the places assigned to them. Water is sprinkled on all of them. Nyāsa is done on the other idols and the process is repeated. The other idols get consecrated with the power of the dhruvabera.[21]

The dhruvabera is black in colour, the other beras are of stone or wood. There are rules which enjoin the measurements of the pedestal and figure of each bera in proportion to the mūlabera. As we have sen before, the dhruvabera may have three

19. Śrīpraśna Saṁhita - XIV.2
20. Kruja Adhikāra - V.1483
21. Lakṣmī Tañtra - (Trans) p.325.

postures, standing (*sthānaka*), sitting (āsana) and lying (śayana). Utsavabera must be of standing posture normally and rarely in the sitting posture. As a general principle the idols have śankha and çakra on the two hands, the left hand in katihasta pose and the right hand in the varadamudra offering boons ,(example) Srinivasa in Tirumala.[22] In some other places the right hand has the abhaya mudra granting security and in some others the club[23] adorning the right hand.

After installation worship is done to the deities everyday at regular intervals. The morning worship includes sañdhyā and homa[24] after wearing ūrdhvapuṇḍra. The priest must approach the dwarapalas for permission to worship the Lord with aupacārika, sāmsparśika and abhyavahārika materials he has procured. One must undertake bhūta śuddhi. Through this process, the gross body will be burnt up by the vital airs. He then feels himself to have been flooded by the water issuing forth from the big toe of God then he creates a new body for himself out of pure sattva by uttering the pañcopaniṣan mañtra.[25]

With the pure body he must meditate upon Kūrma the earth, the milky ocean which represents the powers that support the universe. He builds a boundary around himself with the kavaça mañtra and then has añganyāsa and karaṇyāsa. The mantras he utters enable him to feel one with God. Then he does the worship with antaryāga, manasikayāga and hṛdyāga, the object of meditation being Lakṣmi Nārāyaṇa adorned with conch, discus and club. The Puruṣa Sūkta, sadākṣara, aṣṭāksara and dvādaśākṣara should be recited during worship. Homa is to be performed in the fires triangular in form. The procedure is the same as in external worship.[26]

The external form of worship is to be undertaken after arranging the vessels and other requisites. Vaidika and tāñtrika mañtras, mañdalas according to the Āgama are required to be made use of. The six stages of the worship are mañtrāsana, snānāsana, alankārāsana, bhojyāsana, mañtrāsana and paryāṇkāsana. In the second stage accompanied by dance and music and recitation of mantras, the Lord is given the holy bath.

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22. Pārameśvara Viṇṇagaram
23. Tiruvallikeṇi - Utsava has a goad and not a gada, Peria Tirumoli - p.11.3.1
24. Ahirbudnya Saṁhita - XXVIII, 3-10a
25. Ahirbudnya Saṁhita - XXVIII, 21.28
26. Lakṣmī Tañtra - XXXVI JS XII

Then sandal paste, flowers and garlands are offered. the Vedas and upaniṣadic passages are recited glorifying Nārāyaṇa and the astākṣari and even the sacred (4000) Drāvida Veda is recited.[27] Next during bhojyāsana, food is offered with astra and surabhimudras. After an offering of songs, some extracts from the sacred 4000 are sung. Then a prayer is offered for the glory of the holy Śriraṅga to prosper and grow. The last is the paryāṇkāsana, when a bed is offered for the Lord to take rest. These constitute the daily procedure for worship.

Special worship is enjoined by the Āgamas on full moon, new moon, sravana etc.. Even special festivals are conducted known as the utsava, which give delight to the deity. We shall elaborate on the festivals in a subsequent chapter.

THE PĀÑÇARĀTRA TEXTS

The Nārāyaṇīya section of the Māhābharata throws light on the traditions of the Pāñcarātra Āgama. The Vyūha and the daily routine are explained there. The number of these texts as given in the Viṣṇutañtra are 104, 108 in the Padma and Viśvāmitra samhitas, 106 in the Puruṣottama Samhita, 100 in Bhāradvāja, 100 in Kapiñjala, 91 in Mārkañdeya and 25 in Hayaśīrṣa·Samhita[28] etc.. The introduction to Lakṣmi Tañtra enumerates two hundred and twenty five works[29]. The Pāñcarātra literature mentions two hundred and eighty nine works of which forty five have their names ending in taṇtra, three in Sāgara one in vignāna, one in purāṇa, one in tilaka, one each in siddhānta, one in udradana and the remaining two hundred thirty six in samhita. The others are supposedly lost.

These texts are classified under three heads, Divya, Munibhaṣita and Manuṣa. The Sattvata, Pauskara and Jayākhya are treated as divya, since they contain the expositions of Nārāyaṇa himself. Those written by Brahma and eminent sages are Īṣvara, Pārameśvara and Bhāradvaja are of the second group. The third group written by mortals comes under the last head. Generally, Āgama texts contain four divisions of Jñāna, Yoga, Kriya and Çarya. The Pauṣkara, Jayākhya and Sattvata are known as the best (Ratnatraya). On them are based the Pārameśvara, Padma and Īśvara Samhitas. The Īśvara Samhita consists of four

27. Īśvara Saṁhita - XI.36.37
28. Lakṣmi Tantra - Introduction p.p. 10-13
29. Otto von Schrader - op. cit. p. 6-12

chapters, out of which sixteen are devoted to ritualistic worship, besides description of images, initiation, meditation, mantras and expiation. The chapter on worship is interspersed with philosophical doctrines which form the basis of Śrivaiava philosophy and religion.

The Padma consists of thirty one chapters and deals with various kinds of rituals, chanting of mañtras, offerings and religious festivals[30]. The Pārameśvara has about nine thousand stanzas in twenty six chapters. It has two sections a) jnānakānda and b) Kriyākānda. Here, we find the development of the Pāñcarātra system, through several stages in the same way as in the Nārāyaṇīya section of Mahābhārata[31].

The Ahirbhudhnya Samhita contains sixty chapters of 3500 stanzas. It is in the form of an exposition of the doctrines of one of the eleven Rudras Ahirbudnnya to Narada. The main purpose of the samhita is to expound the glory of Sudarśana. It starts with a prayer to Viṣṇu in Sudarśana's form and another to the śakti of Viṣṇu. A very detailed account of twenty one kinds of Upadevas, sixty topics of the Samkhya system and ten topics of the Pāñcarātra system, cosmological accounts, including creation and dissolution, the character of the supreme Brahman, occultism, theory and practice, yoga and a brief account of the installation of images are laid out. Nyasa or self-surrender also gets treated here. Since Utpala (850 A.D.) cites a passage in his spandapradīpika, which resembles the one in the Ahirbhudnya samhita.[32] Its date is probably fixed for 850 A.D. in the Kashmir region and use of birch bark for the drawing of a yañtra is another proof.

The Pāñcarātra is based partly on Vedic and partly on the tāñtric system and therefore it believes in the esoteric nature of the mañtras and establishes the fact that the world has come into being from the Sudarśana aspect.[33] This Samhita reiterates the view that dharma is the cause of knowledge; self-offering is indirect dharma, whereas the way in which the yogin directly realises God is called direct dharma such as is taught in the Pāñcarātra literature called the Sattvata Śāsana. By the Sāmkhya path one can get only an indirect knowledge of God, but through

30. Dasgupta - Pāñçarātra Literature, p.23
31. Dr.V. Varadacharya - Āgamas and South Indian Vaisṇavism p.278.
32. Otto von Schrader - op. cit. p.18
33. Dasgupta - op. cit., p.62

yoga one can have the direct intuition of God. Emancipation is achieved through efforts like dharma, artha and kāma.[34]

The Ahirbhudnya samhita and Lakşmi Tantra refer to the Sattvata and the Jayākhya. The texts mentioned above are the important ones, which the exponents of Vaiṣṇavism have chosen to cite in support of various topics.

THE VALIDITY OF THE PĀÑÇARĀTRA ĀGAMA

The Vaikhānasa and Pāñcarātra Āgama prohibit the adoption of the practices present in each other. On this ground it was contended that Vaikhanasa to be held valid leading to the declaration of the Pāñcarātra Āgama lacking authority.

There was objection to it from the periods when the Brahmasūtras were compiled. The earliest to do it was Śaṅkara (A.D. 788 to 820) who took strong objections to admitting Pāñcarātra's validity. The main adversaries against this system being the mīmāmsakas of the Bhāskara and Prabhākara schools, the Advaitin and the Naiyāyikas with the aid of reason and scriptures were showing strong objections. Though Pāñcarātra was expounded by Nārāyaṇa, according to them it could not be admitted valid like the Vedas.. Moreover, it preaches practices which are pronounced anti-vedic. Kūrmapurāṇa refers to Pāñcarātra as a system which is outside the Vedic culture. Moreover, the sacramental practices are governed by their own doctrines.

Secondly, for Pañçasañskāra, the initiation necessary for worship, the Pāñcarātra prescribes both the dvijas and the non-dvijas (Sudras and Women). On these grounds the Pāñcarātra appears to violate the Vedic tradition. In addition to this, the Pāñcarātra declares that the self-Samkarşana is born of Vāsudeva, the mind called Pradyumna from Samkarşana and the ego called Aniruddha from Pradyumna. Samkarşana, the self, cannot be admitted because breath, mind and all other sense organs are stated to spring from the Brahman. If according to the interpretation of the Pāñcarātra system, the rise of the self and mind by taking Samkarşana and Pradyumna is taken as Vāsudeva Himself, the impossibility of the origination is not contradicted.

Śāndilya learnt the Veda, Ithihāsas and Purāṇas, and having had no satisfaction prayed to God and got the Pāñcarātra

doctrines. If the fact that the Pāñcarātra like other texts as the Manusmriti prove their common origin in the Vedas then those who follow the Pāñcarātra rites are as good as Brahmins; though they have the external marks appearing as brahmins, society does not approve of it. The word Sattvata indicates a lower caste. Even a Sattvata of the pañçama caste worshipping in temples is called a Bhāgavata. They have neither Vedic duties nor relationship with Brāhmins. If the literature was founded on the Vedas, the reason for their recommending special rituals is meaningless. This is why probably Bādarāyaṇa also refutes the philosophical theory of the Pāñcarātra in the Brahma Sūtra.

Yāmuna, who occupies the central place amongst the south Indian Vaiṣṇava ācāryas, wrote the "Āgama Prāmānya", which is devoted to vindicting the authority of the Pāñçarātra Tantras. These works have always been considered canonical. But some sects challenged their authority. Hence Yāmuna felt the need for this defence of Pāñçarātra. He with the aid of reason and scripture met this many pronged attack and established that the tantras are authoritative.

In the Mahābhārata we find several references to the Pāñçarātra system, which must be the same as the cosmological one and the later Pāñçarātra Samhitas must have meant the same. This system enjoys considerable currency, because it combines particular cosmological and psychological views with a devotional religion concentrating on the person of Kṛṣṇa or Nārāyaṇa.

Pāñçarātra from the beginning allied itself more with popular devotional religion. But there arises an argument that Pāñçarātra is self-descrepant as it contradicts the Vedic teachings, so it is liable for rejection. In a particular adhikarṇa, Yāmuna established the validity of the Pāñçarātra. If either of the Vyūhas are chosen of the will of Brahman, to protect the world, it may be argued that Pāñcarātra does not admit God's popularity, since it is an uncompromising monotheism. All the Vyūha forms are really the highest Brahman. They are not jivas, manas or ahaṁkāra. They are so called since they control these factors within.

These Āgamas actually deny origination to the soul and assert its eternity. But it could be said that though the Vedas and Āgamas contain an identical teaching, the latter are easier of comprehension.

Though a temple priest at Śrirangam, Yāmuna is apostolic in his fervour to persuade orthodoxy to accept not only the

existence, but also the truth of a complete Vaiṣṇava theology. A master dialectician, he exposed the fallacies in his rivals' arguments with a wealth of incontrovertible evidence. He restored to Vedanta thought the religious inspiration that was threatened by the arguments of monistic schools. he saw to it that religion contained in the temple worship was guided by Pāñçarātra tradition. Thus His Āgama Prāmāṇya is the first step for the emancipation of the popular religion.

Later, due to historical circumstances, when they had to save religion and God (the icons) from the onslaught of Muslim invasion, Sri Vedānta Deśika, a later preceptor, stood by the works that sustained religion and philosophy. He also felt the,need for the Vedic background. his renowned work the Pāñçarātra Rakṣa again vindicates the validity of the Āgamas. The first section speaks of the authority, classification of the Āgama texts and the temples governed by them. The second section deals with the daily routine. The third interprets the Nitya, a work of Rāmānuja. With immesurable quotations from the Pāñçarātra literature he conveys in unshakable terms the authority of the Pāñçarātra.

Among the writers of Viśiṣṭādvaita, Yāmuna, Rāmānuja and Deśika have made noteworthy contribution to the cause of the Pāñçarātra. Yāmuna in his Āgama Prāmāṇya, discusses Utpatya Sambhavat on the question of treating the adherents of the Pāñçarātra as brāhmins following the Vedic tradition. Yāmuna took the first half of this section as prima facie and the latter half maintaining Pāñcarātra's validity and Rāmānuja followed this alone.

The cumulative aspect of these Āgamic and purāṇic development is found in the Ālvārs' works and also in the Stotra Ratna of Yāmuna. Dr. V. Varadacharya says that its impact is clearly felt in Rāmānuja's Gadyatraya. The Prabandhas speak of all the five forms of God close to one another. Rāmānuja naturally treated the Arça form as identical with reality, since the icon is consecrated through agamic principles and installed to become non-material and sacred. Rāmānuja has profusely drawn from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and was naturally influenced by the Āgamas through the Jitante Stotra.

Prapatti or the theory of self-surrender has been adopted by Lakṣmi Tantra, Ahirbudhnya Samhita, Gītā, Upaniṣads and the Ālvārs' hymns. Yet the Āgamic sources must have influenced

Rāmānuja. Philosophy and religion are wedded in Vedānta, and the Vaiṣṇava Āgamas strengthen this wedding. Rāmānuja's concepts of Prapatti and daily worship are treated elaborately in his Gadyatraya and Nitya.

(1)The Aupaçārika, Samparśika, Abhyavakārika.

(2)Bhūta Śuddhi.

(3)Worship both, inward and outward.

(4)Six Āsanas.

(5)Prostration.

(6)Use of Āgama mantras.

All these hail only from the Pāñţarātra texts.

Thus it is clear that Rāmānuja adopted the Āgama precepts for the religious aspects of his system. It is again Dr. V. Varadacharya's view that since Rāmānuja was primarily concerned with the establishment of his system against Śankara's theology, he probably did not present the Pāñçarātra doctrines on the philosophical side.

In the innumerable variety the Hindu culture unfolds or manifests itself, there is a golden thread of unity, which places each system in its own compartment. The study of the Pāñçarātra Āgama is one amongst the many in the garland and is an integral part of the tremendous whole, which shows the infinitude of the Supreme Brahman.

ANTIQUITY OF THE BHĀGAVATA RELIGION

Regarding the antiquity of the Pāñçarātra doctrine there is evidence to show that it is indeed very ancient and is associated with the Puruṣa Sukta of the Ṛg Veda which is, as it were, the foundation stone of all future Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Pāñcarātra is generally regarded as the Bhāgavata religion of the Bhakti school and it has been proved that this school of thought goes back to a period much anterior to Buddhism and Jainism.

The word Vāsudeva occurs for the first time in the Taittriya Araṇyaka,, in the Viṣṇu Gāyatri in the tenth Prapathaka. Vāsudeva *Kṛṣṇa* is referred to in the Çāṇdōgyōpaniṣad, the antiquity of which is beyond question. There is mention of a ṛsi named Ghōra Angīrasa and his disciple Vasudeva *Kṛṣṇa*, the latter probably the scion of the royal family of Mathura and the warrior teacher of the Mahābhārata. The virtues of penance, literality and

righteousness, which *Kṛṣṇa* learned from Ghōra Aṅgīrasa in the Çāṇdōgyōpaniṣad reappear in the Gītā XVI.1.

The Angīrasa family must have been associated with the Bhojas as early as the Ṛg Veda. 111.53.7. The Bhojas were a section of the Sattvatas, the tribe to which *Kṛṣṇa* belonged. To protect his kinsman, *Kṛṣṇa,* with the help of Samkarṣana overthrew Kaṁsa. Now we can see the soundness of the view that Vāsudeva *Kṛṣṇa,* a disciple of Ghōra Angīrasa is identical with the Sattvata *Kṛṣna.* The legends dealing with the origin of the Bhāgavata religion founded by Kṛṣna of the epic are somehow or the other connected with the solar deity.

A passage in the Śānti Parva of the Mahābhārata says that the Sattvata religion is said to have been declared in ancient times[35].

Lord Kṛṣna says that he taught the immortal yoga to Vivasvān, who conveyed to it Manu and who in turn imparted it to his son Ikṣvāku.

Pāṇini (5th cent. B.C.) refers to Vāsudevaka as a person whose object of devotion is Vāsudeva (IV.3.98) . The Indica, 4th century B.C. refers to Kṛṣna as Herekles worshipped as a demi God in Kleisobora, Kṛṣnapura or Mathura. The Taittriya Vāsudeva is identified with Viṣṇu. Here we find the contact of Bhāgavatism with Vaiṣṇavism, though it took some time for the complete identification.

The Gośundi Stone inscription gives a record of the creation of a pūjā stone (Śila Prākāra) at Nārāyaṇa Vaṭa by Gajāyana Sarvatrata, the son of Parasan for Samkarṣana and Vāsudeva who are termed as sarveśvaras. Even Kautilya's Arthaśastra refers to Samkarṣana. In the Mahābharata he is referred to as the elder brother of Vāsudeva Kṛṣna. Again in the religious philosophy of the Bhāgavatas as expounded in the Narāyaṇīya section of Śānti Parva, Vāsudeva is identified with Paramātman, while Samkarṣana is identified with the individual soul. In this worship, we have the germ of the Vyūha doctrine of the Bhāgvata or Pāñçarāta.

The next evidence we can take up here is the Besnagar Column. Its first part gives us the details of a Garuḍadhvaja of Vāsudeva, erected by Bhāgavata Heliodora, a son of Diya, a native

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Mahābhārata - Śānti Parva, XII, 335, 19, Gorakhpur Edn.,

of Taxila a Yavana ambassador. The second part mentions the three precepts of self-restraint, charity and consciousness which lead to heaven. This is enough proof of the fact that this religion existed in II century B.C. and had even captured the hearts of the alien Greeks.

Paṭanjali, a contemporary of Puṣyamitra (II cent. B.C.), in his commentary on Panini's sūtra, mentions Vāsudeva as a specially revered divine being.

In another verse, Balarāma and Kesava are associated with the temple of Dhanapati[36]. Thus by 2nd cent. B.C., Kṛṣna was already associated with Nārāyaṇa who was also a God in Śvetadvīpa as mentioned in various Āgamas.

The names of Saṁkarṣana and Vāsudeva occur in inscriptions at Chinna Gañjam at the time of Yajnaśri Śatakarni, which shows the Pāñçarātra school is known by other names also, Bhāgavata, Sattvata and Ekāyana.

The term Ekāyana means the only means to reach the goal. This is supposed to be one of the ancient lores learnt by Nārada as is evident from what he tells Sanatkumāra in the Çāndōgya Upaniṣad. VII 1.2.

The term Bhāgavata also seems to be signifying a follower of the Vedic deity called Bhaga, who appears to have been highly revered in Vedic times. Later on, Bhaga was associated with sun God also. In due course of time it came to denote the divine powers of goodness, grace etc. and is attributed to possess all the beneficient qualities and powers known as Bhāgavata.This way, there arose a religion in which the chief object or worship was Bhāgavata. This religion was termed the Bhāgavata religion. This faith is considered as the parent of the later Vaiṣṇavism and in due course of time Viṣṇu and Bhāgavat came to be identified and accordingly Vaisnavism came to mean the worship of an all pervading God in heaven, who is the possessor of all auspicious powers and blessings.

36. Panini Sūtra - II.2.34

THE ĀLVĀRS

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa XI.5.38.40 says that great devotees of Viṣṇu will appear in the south on the banks of the Tamraparni, Pālār and Kāveri. Accordingly we find that all the twelve Ālvārs were born in the south. They are the most ancient saints of this region of whom Poygai, Bhuttat, Pey and Bhaktisara or Tirumaliśai Ālvār are the earliest. Nammālvār, Periālvār, Goda and Tondaradippodi came next. Tiruppānālvar and Parakāla were the last of them. The traditional date ascribed to the earliest Ālvārs is (420 B.C.) but, modern researchers bring their date down to a period not earlier than the 7th or the 8th century A.D. The Guruparamparās give incidents from the lives of the Ālvārs. As the very term Ālvārs indicates the religion of the Ālvārs lays stress on an intensely passionate love for Viṣṇu and meditation upon Him. Their devotion was not only in His incarnational manifestation but also in His expression, in His image - (the Arça form) and reaches the highest point of sublimity. These hymns known as the 4000 seek to establish the supremacy of Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa. This overflowing love is centered on Viṣṇu to the exclusion of all other Gods. In consequence was their conviction that there is no other God greater than Nārāyaṇa and their meaningful life insisted on single-minded devotion to Him.

Nammālvār, Āndāl and Periālvār were all models of bridal mysticism. Sometimes their hymns express parental affection, sometimes the love of a friend, a companion, a servant, thoughts of a female lover for her beloved etc. Soaked in divine consciousness Nammālvār perceives Kṛṣna everywhere. The emphasis in Nammālvar's thought is on God's accessibility as a saviour of mankind[1]. It is His līla that the Ālvār delights in.

GOD AS A CREATOR AND PRESERVER

For Nammālvār Nārāyaṇa is the prime or essence and His unified action is creation, preservation and destruction. He reiterates the view that worship in the Arça form is not different

1. Tiruvāimoli, 1.3.1-10

from the devotion one who is Lord of the world –process. He is the primordial reality from which everything evolves.[2] When the Sanskrit language was at its zenith both for religious and secular purposes, the hymnal literature burst forth in the vernacular in the Tamil country. These have a mystical element in them and reflect the intense longing of the mystics for communion with God. The Ālvārs have sought for an intuitive union with the Cosmic ground.

Bridal mysticism denotes the mystic's passion of God Madalūrdal. In the sense that they were posing themselves as the lady love of the Lord. They felt that they were the brides of God, not belonging to either sex. The Ālvār gives expression of his love as bride in some decads. The mother of the bride tells her visitors and friends that none but the Lord can afford relief. The saki shows her interest in her welfare and tells us of her condition. These songs have themes both of separation and union. At such a stage, the lover thinks of sending a message through the bees, birds, cloud etc. The Tolkāppiam mentions an example of the passion of love, the maḍalūrdal. Maḍal literally means as palmyra stalk, but it signifies the unreturned love, and the desperate state of the lover when he takes to suicide as the final course. This is represented by the lover's telling the world of his decision by renouncing all and climbing onto a palmyra stalk. Its aim is to achieve the beloved or to die, usually only man is qualified to undergo this. In reality love is always love unto death.

It is at once an appeal to God to come down from Vaikuṇṭa to accept this flower of love. and is a final act to throw away pride. In short, it is a spiritual means to attain the ultimate goal and is also a part of prapatti. The two madals of Tirumangai are dramatisation of the absolute faith and surrender to the Lord. The mystic experience undergoes all the points of separation, but a state is reached when the grace of the Lord flows on the devotee, and reaches the climax of union.

The same Ālvār has employed a literary device in one of his cryptic works called the Tiruvelukurrirukkai. This poem constructed in āsiriyappa, rāga Desiya - and tāla Ādi - is a single stanza of 46 lines the quartrains running into the fifth line which has been set into a pattern of a ratha.

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2. Tiruvāimoli 11.8-1

Here Stanza 1 is an encoded pyramid composed of increasing squares in the progression (11^2, 111^2, 1111^2, 11111^2 etc. yielding palindromes successively for 6 or 7 or 8 tiers as found in the Sārṅgapani temple walls at Kumbhakonam the diagram of which is shown in the appendix.

Arça: - The avatāras are past events. Though they show that God can assure fulfilment of the needs of His devotees, yet they remain as past events.

But in the Arça or the icon His effective presence is immediate. A large portion of this masterly principal Nārāyaṇa, resident at different places all of which have now become Divya Deśas, places of religious pilgrimage. It may lead to the strange question; how God, the all powerful could be made to reside in a man-made image. But for the Alvar, God is so great that he can place Him within the framework of the human mind. He juxtaposes the transcendent with His immanence.[3]

Prior to the period of Ālvārs (700 - 800 A.D.) there were temples of Viṣṇu at Tirumāliruncholai, Kuḍal (Madurai), Śrirangam, Tiruvekkha, Yathotkāri (Kāñçi) and Tirumalai. There is reference in the early Tamil classics about these as well. These and many other temples in Tamil Nadu and Andhra attained great importance and glory as they became sanctified by the hymns of the Ālvārs. Most of these temples must have been in existence long before the period of the Ālvārs, though not as the huge structures they are found now.

The compositions of the Ālvārs were looked upon as the "Tamil Veda" or at any rate as the "Tamil Upaniṣads". This resulted later in the evolution of the concept of Ubhaya Vedānta, which included the vedānta based on the Upaniṣads and the hymns of the Ālvārs.

As we have seen before, the Ālvārs were twelve in number, among whom Godā or Andāl, the woman singer, is included. Madhurakavi was a disciple of Nammālvār. The compositions of the Ālvārs run in to 4000 Tamil verses. Of these the maximum number of more than 1000 were composed by Nāmmālvār and also a thousand by Tirumankai Alvar. It is possible to classify the verses roughly under seven heads. Hymns in honour of (i) individual shrines (ii) shrines honoured collectively (iii) avataras particularly of Rama and Kṛṣṇa (iv) Kṛṣṇa's exploits (v) bridal

3. Rāmānuja - Bhāṣya

mystics (vi) grouping of Para, Vyūha, Vibhava, Arça and Antaryāmin in twos or more in number (vii) philosophy. The number of individual shrines sung about by Tirumankai Alwar is 47. Several other shrines are eulogised in his other works like Tirumaḍals and Peria Tirumozhi. The Rāma and Kṛṣṇa incarnations received special treatment at the hands of Kulaśekhara and Periālvār, respectively. Tirumalai, Tiruvekka and Tirukkovalur are sung together by Peyālvar in the first Tiruvandādi as having the Lord in standing, sitting and reclining postures. Here both the Arça and the vibhava forms are sung. Peyālvār sings in praise of the Antaryāmin, Venkateśa, Nārāyaṇa in the milky ocean and Śrirangam in 28 verses. Bridal mysticism gets a rich treatment in the poems of Nammālvār and Tirumankai Alwar. Tiruvāimozhi 6 and 7, illustrate some of the aspects of the love of Jīva for the Lord, Śiriya and Periya Tirumaḍal of Tirumankai illustrate the longings of the bride and her irrepressible love for the Lord.

A major part of the first decad in the Tiruvaimoli is devoted to a depiction of the Lord as filled with radiance, defying any description, incomparable to any object known to us and beyond human intellect. The Lord is ever full - Paripūrṇa, that is he remains full how much ever he gives away, he does not diminish by the act.[4]. He is so liberal to give us whatever we ask of Him. T. Moli 3.9.5, *"The spotless Lord shall make me a servant of His devotees - Amalanādipirān (Tirumalisai).*

Those who repeat the Lord's name all the time have the right to sell me to another (Periālvar[5]).

This shows the perfect condition in which a devotee shall seek to place himself. Any devotee is a servant and slave of another devotee. Tonḍaraḍippoḍi says that he is such a wayward person that the Lord of Śrirangam does not choose to treat him as His man.[6]

Madhurakavi Alvar, a vaidika and cultured scholar, became the pupil of Nammālvār. To him, Nammālvār was the only Lord and deity. In his composition (Kaṇṇinun Ciruttānbu), he mentions Māran (Nammālvār) as having rendered the veda into Tamil. This must have full weight and validity as he being a vaidika scholar

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4. Tiruvāimoli 3.9.5
5. Periālvār Tirumoli 4.4.10
6. Tirumālai 37

steeped in Vedic culture and ritualistic practices should make this glorious reference to his preceptor.

Periālvār is an eloquent illustrator of mystic consciousness. He loves his deity as a mother would love her child. This Alwar was a matchless controversialist since he defeated all the scholars of his times. From what we have seen, it is clear that the Ālvars brought to the forefront the importance of the feeling of love as the most effective means of winning the deity.

In their work, these Ālvars present their philosophical views about the nature of the deity and man's relation to Him. There is a passionate yearning after God which is often delineated on the analogy of sexual love, but represents divine love in terms of human love expressed in a very chaste form. Thus these poets simultaneously sing the divine glory and majesty of God and also give eloquent expression to their philosophical convictions. Tirumāliśai and Periālvār were completely at home in their knowledge of the philosophical schools. Their emotional outpourings also give expression to philosophical concepts about the nature and destiny of man while on the attributes of the Brahman, their emphasis is on the transcendental aspects – which mark Him off from the individual soul.

Nammālvar, who is recognised as the most philosophical of the Ālvārs, maintains paradoxically that God has form and is formless also. He is beyond the beyond.[7] In Vaiṣnava literature, God is looked upon as the very perfection of all the six divine qualities.[8]

These saints believe in the personal God named Nārāyaṇa. The most important feature of the personal God conceived in terms of intimate human relationships is love. The God of the Ālvārs is the God of love.

According to Nammālvar, redemption is the concern of Viṣṇu, who is the saviour. The soul is related to the Lord as an attribute. the self is inseparable from Him. One thing is ascertained here that religion is the foundation of morality.[9] Religion must translate itself into morality, but it cannot be equated with morality.[10]

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7. Tirumoli 1.1.8
8. Tirumoli 3.4.10
9. Vidyarthi - Early Indian Thought, page 20.
10. ibid

Moreover, these hymns teach the sublime spiritual truth contained in the three rahasyas, or mystical treatises called (i) the Tirumantra (ii) Dvaya and (iii) Çarama Śloka. These are distributed among the 4000 verses in the following manner. The first cluster known as the Mudalāyiram is comprised of (i) Tirupallāndu (Periālvār) (ii) Periālvār Tirumoli (iii) Tiruppāvai (iv) Nāchiar Tirumoli of Āndāl (v) Perumāl Tirumoli of Kulaśekhara (vi) Tiruchanda Virritam - Tirumaliśaippiran (vii) Tirumālai (viii) Tiruppallieluçi of Tonḍaraḍippoḍi (ix) Amalanadipiran of Tiruppānālvār (x) Kanninut Çiruttāmbu teaches the meaning of Tirumantra of which 1 and 9 teach its first number; the Holy Pranava AUM and 10 its second number Nāmah.

The 2nd cluster comprising the (i) Peria Tirumoli (ii) Tirukkuru and (iii) Nedunthānḍagam of Tiru Mankai Ālvār teach its third number Nārāyaṇa. The 4th cluster comprising the Tiruvaimoli teaches the Holy Dvaya Mañtra.

The 3rd cluster called the Iyarpa comprising the (i) Four Tiruvandādis (ii) Tiruviruttam (iii) Tiruvāśiriyam (iv) Peria Tiruvandādi of Nammālvār (v) Tiruvezhukūrrirukkai (vi) Śiriya (vii) Peria Tirumadal, the holy Çarama Śloka.

Author	Works
Poigai	Mudal Tiruvandādi
Bhūtatt	Second Tiruvandādi
Pey	Third Tiruvandādi
Tirumaliśai	Nānmugan Tiruvandādi, Tiruçanda Virittam
Periālvār	Tirupallānḍu and Peria Ālvār Tirumoli
Āndāl	Tiruppāvai - Nāççiār Tirumoli
Kulaśekhara	Perumāl Tirumoli
Tonḍaraḍippoḍi	Tirumālai - Tirupallieluççhi
Nammālvār	Tiruvāimoli, Tiruvāsiriyam, Tiruviruttam, Peria Tiruvandādi
Madhurakavi	Kanninut Çiruttāmbu
Tiruppānālvār	Amalanadipirān
Tirumañgai	Peria Tirumoli, Tirukkurunthāñdagam, Tiru Nedunthāñdagam, Tiruvezhukutriru-kkai, Śiriya Tirumadal, Peria Tirumadal.

One has to note with regret that the historical accounts of these fairly well-known treatises on India's religion, have not thrown much light on the Ālvars and their immense contribution to the growth of religious concepts, except for literary evidences like the (1) Divya Suri Çaritam by Garuḍavāhana Paṇdita, contemporary and disciple of Rāmānuja (which fact is (controversial). (2) Prapannāmrita (3) Guru Parampara Prabhāva (4) Prabandhasāra by Vedantaāçārya (5) Upadeśa Ratnamala - Maṇavāla Māṃuni (6) Pālanadai Vilakkam - (7) Deśika Prabandham by Vedānta Deśika.

To have a peep into the eternal wisdom of the Ālvārs - we may see some of the verses speaking in mystic smybolism, Piogai says :

"With love the lamp - longing the oil
The frenzied heart the wick - the soul melted
The light of wisdom, light I to Nārāyaṇa,
In chaste Tamizh. I know so well."

2nd Tiruvandādi.[11]

"What makes me king is not the crown
which men set on my head :
But King, when king of kings doth make
His Lotus Feet my crown"

Perumāl Tirumoli X.7. -[12]

"Whom dare we fear now !
so panoplied are we
with this all holy name
Even Death from our door
Oh - ousted, headlong flies"

Tirumālai Verse I. -[13]

"Mark I if to man I am e'er noise abroad
That moment would my life foresooth depart"

-Nççiyar Tirumoli - 1.5.

1. *Oh withered I, withering agonised in my mind and in bottomless depths of misery fling.*
2. *For today was I joined, with wenches blithe, as if joys of a bid were the sole end and aim.*

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11. Alkondavilli Govindacharya - Lives of the three Saints, The holy lives of the Ālvārs or Drāviḍa Saints, Anantacharya Indological Research Institute, Bombay - 1982, page 83.
12. A Govindacharya - Life of Kulaśekhara Ālvār, Ibid, page 133
13. Tirumoli (Sriram Bharati) 8.4.2.3

3. *"Roved I thus; roving found I saving Grace which illumined me, and woke I to my estate".*
4. *And searched and searching I did discover the Holy Name of Nārāyaṇa* -*Peria tirumoli* 1.1.1
5. *"Though He is everywhere, He cannot be seen even by the body.*

"He is the first cause, the Almighty who swallowed
all He burnt the three cities granted wisdom to the God
He is Brahman, the Creator & Shiva, the destroyer too.
Your spouses Sri and Bhu command and all the
celestial serve
The blessed three worlds you domain the forms
you will or yours
Oh! Gem Lord with lotus eyes and coral lips that hurt me
Oh! My soul Ambrosia, Lord who churned the ocean,
bless me with your vision.[14]
Eternal angels Lord, who yet lost design to veil thy form
In all creations varied state, for saving souls
Vouchsafe in all thy Grace to stay and hear thy servant's
cry
That will be saved the dire return to former wretchedness
When we mistook the body for our souls and sinned
all sins
Which clung to us and fixed us ever more to mortal frame"
-Tiruviruttam I verse.
Serve heart His bright ills chasing feet and live
That Lord of bliss surpassing glories all
That Lord who darkness chasing wise love grants -
That Lord who rules supreme over deathless souls
Tiruvāimoli 1.1.1.[15]

Now it is most appropriate to sum up these sweet songs of Nammālvār with the eulogy by his disciple Madhurakavi, who preached to mankind, not the Prathama Parva, (the greatness of God) but the greatness of God's Saints - Çārāma Parva) concluding the eleven verses he dedicated to his guru, Madhuṛakavi says -

"Mark high heavens do those attain who reverent faith,

14. Tirumoli (Sriram Bharati) 8.11
15. A Govindacharya - Life of Saint Nammālvār, op.cit., 1982, page 222.

place in my lay, For Him I love who is Nagari's Lord[16]"

The verses exhibit rapturous passions, weaving themselves in the very eternity of the individual soul, which visualises God everywhere.

The mysticism of the Ālvārs can be remembered as a landmark in the evolution of Śrivaiṣṇava philosophy and religion, while in the Vedic age priestly practices and rituals played a major part.

Men of the three higher castes enjoyed the right to perform sacrifices. The age of the Upaniṣads makes a protest against this religious aristocracy. The Ālvārs present the same view point as that of the Upaniṣadic seers. They opened the road of faith and worship without distinction of caste and sex, for we find in the galaxy of these saints Nammālvār was a vellāla belonging to the fourth varna, who was chosen by Madhura Kavi, a brahmin, as his guru. Tirumankai belonged to a family of robbers. Goda was a woman and Tiruppānālvar, a pariah of the fifth Varna. Their images are deified in south Indian temples and are worshipped. This shows the democratic and evolving character of Śrivaiṣṇavism. This probably paved the way for the entry of sudrās into this sect later, which we will see in the coming chapters.

This liberalisation of the religious code probably opened for all the castes, the path to Prapatti or self-surrender. There is great similarity between the Vedic seers and the Ālvārs, for both were engrossed in divine rapture and realised truth in its totality. Thus we find that Rāmānuja studied their works under able preceptors and later caused commentaries to be written on these hymns. In fact, Rāmānuja is termed as the foster mother to the sacred 4000, whereas Nammālvār is looked upon as the mother.[17]

We can discern in the works of the Ālvārs their definite philosophical views about the nature of God, the world, and man's relation to Him. Their yearnings are amorous longings which emphasize the beauty and charm of God. From their intoxicated experience, they present the theory of God as one possessed of perfection and make Him their personal God and tell us that man's highest good consists in worshipping Nārāyaṇa alone.

16. A Govindacharya - Life of Saint Nammālvār, op.cit., 1982, page 226.
17. S.N. Das Gupta - History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. III, page 80.

These sacred hymns bring to the forefront of human religious consciousness, the value and significance that religion holds. Sri Rāmānuja wove the idea and thoughts of the Ālvārs into the fabric or Śrivaiṣṇavism. This explains how the religion which Rāmānuja fashioned got systematised on a philosophic basis and was named as Ubhaya vedānta. The prabandha is placed at par with the Vedas and chanted alongwith the presentation of the Vedic hymns.

In short these songs, in a cluster, move like a grand river of glory, majestically in whirls and rapids and present an infinite panorama of beautiful pictures of Hari and Śri, the inseparable Divine Couple.

THE PLACE OF ŚRĪ IN THE HINDU PANTHEON

According to Suvira Jaiswal, Śrī and Lakṣmī are the two Goddesses merged into one in the early upaniṣadic period. The Śrī Sūkta, is a supplement attached to the Ṛg Veda which eulogizes Śri, and is assumed to have been composed at the time of the Yajur Veda and the Brāhmaṇas. In the Araṇya Kānda of Rāmāyana[18] Rāvāna asks Sīta whether she was Hrī or Śrī. The Mahābhārata and Nātyaśāstra[19] also refer to Śrī and Lakṣhmī. Jaiswal further says that the Goddess of the sign of luck during the Vedic period became the Goddess of wealth in due course of time. Śrī Sūkta, which is described in the Viṣṇu Dharmottara Purāṇa as Puṣṭi Vardāna lends to an increase in prosperity. The Sūkta says that she is of moist nature (Ārdrā). Nitya Puṣṭam - (ever nourished). Other terms are Padma Varṇa (of the colour of the lotus) Padma Malini - (wearing a garland of lotus). She destroys Alakṣmī - (bad luck) and poverty. She is a guardian deity of good luck. Iconography presents her as standing in the midst of a cluster of trees. A few early descriptions represent her in the Gajalakṣmi form. These early reliefs are from Bharhut, Sanchi and Bodhgaya. The Śrī Sūkta talks of her exulting at the sound of elephants. (Hastināda Pramōdini). The concept of Lakṣmī as fertility Goddess is traced to the epics and the Purāṇas. According to Viṣṇu Dharmotthara Purāṇa[20], her insignia is lotus. Once she was accepted as the Goddess of wealth all sections of people got attracted to her. On some of the Gupta coins Śrī is

18. Rāmāyaṇa 111.16.17.
19. Nāṭya Śāstra 111.8.68.
20. Jaiswal The Origin and Development of Vaiṣṇavism, Page 96.

depicted as holding a ribbon, a symbol of royalty - even Paṭañjali refers to her in his work.

However, the best known account is given in the Ādi Parva of the Mahābhārata.[21] The Viṣṇu Purāṇa says that Śrī appeared from the ocean to join Viṣṇu of her own accord. In the Gītā[22]. she is spoken of as a manifestation of Viṣṇu among women along with Kīrti, Medhā and Kṣama. The Lakṣīmī tañtra (4000 stanzas in 57 chapters) in the form of a discourse was given by Śrī to Indra. To the sages of the Malaya Hills, Nārada gave a version of this tantra. The end of every chapter refers to the texts as Pāñcarātra Sāra. Herein we find that the female principle Śakti is said to be responsible for all that takes place as creation, maintenance and destruction, keeping Viṣṇu in the background. But only at the will of Viṣṇu is she active. As a philosophical principle, she occupies a status equal to that of Viṣṇu making herself an integral part of Him.

The supreme Nārāyaṇa is unity in duality. He is ever with Śrī and is therefore called Śrīnivāsa. In His highest form he is associated with His Śrī, Bhūmi and Nīlā. Otto Schrader points out that these are identified in the Vihagārdra Samhita in the Sīta Upaniṣad. He also refers to Sītā as Mahālakṣmī existing in three forms, Içha,, Kriyā and Śakti[23]. The Rāmāyana refers to Her as the wife of Viṣṇu. Amarakośa mentions the words, Śrīpati and Haripriya. In the Viṣṇu Sahasranāma Viṣṇu is Śrīmān, Śrīnivāsa, Śrīśa, Śrīdhara, etc., which words were enjoined to be muttered daily. This goes to prove the importance of Śrī in the Viṣṇu cult. The evidence of the epics and the Purāṇas suggests that Śrī was adopted in the Vaiṣṇava pantheon during the period of the younger parts of the composition. Of the Mahābhārata and the early Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas in the 2nd centry A.D.[24] The Gupta inscriptions are the first epigraphical records which mention the union of Śrī with Viṣṇu. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa speaks of Her as existing among all beings.[25] She represents all that is female and Viṣṇu as all that is male; both are ever existent and complimentary to each other. The Ahirbudhnya Samhita[26] (6th century A.D.) identifies her with the energy of Viṣṇu through which the Divine

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21. Mahābhārata 1.60.13
22. Gītā 10.34.5
23. S.N. Das Gupta - History of Indian Philosophy, page 41.
24. Suvira Jaiswal- The Origin and Development of Vaiṣṇavism page 106.
25. ibid, page 114
26. ibid, page 115

will carries on its cosmological activities. Thus we find that Śrī is a pure Aryan deity, who absorbed many concepts associated with Aryan and non-Aryan elements. Originally a mother Goddess, she came to be allied with Viṣṇu in the Gupta period and played a formidable role in the later theological speculation of the Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇavism.

Schrader says that both Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu have distinct identities. Even in "Pralaya" they do not completely coalesce, but become, as it were a, single principle.[27] The mutual relation of the two is declared to be one of inseperable bond or inherence, like that of an attribute and its bearer.

The transcendent aspect of Viṣṇu remains completely in the background in the Pāñcarātra where we are concerned with only one force - Lakṣmī as bhūta, who appears as the universe and as Kriyā, vitalises and governs it. Her first phase of manifestation is called Śuddhasṛṣṭi, and in the stage following, the guṇas (attributes) of Nārāyaṇa make their appearance. In their totality, guṇas make up the body of Vāsudeva as well as that of His consort Lakṣmī, that these two are constantly seen by the free soul. It is mainly in this form qualified by the six guṇas and distinct from Śakti that Viṣṇu is called Vāsudeva. Rāmānuja accepts in the Vaiṣṇava doctrines that the Lord is united with His divine consort. Mother Śrī is the fullest consciousness - power of the divine Puruṣottama in Vaiṣṇava theology. She is both the mother and the agent of our ascent to the Lord, fulfilling it through her inimitable grace and knowledge.

The importance of Śrī is well rooted in Vaiṣṇava tradition. The works of Yamuna, Rāmānuja and the later Āçāryas eulogise her superior position. In the later chapter we shall see how she evolves as a mediatrix[28] for getting salvation for the jīva. Her grace is essential to mukti. As divine mediatrix she intervenes between the jīva and Paramātma, transforms the former into a mukta and the latter into a saviour.

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27. Otto Von Schrader - Introduction to Pāñarātra, IV 78, Page 38.
28. Lakṣmī Tantra 11.17.

A SHORT LIFE HISTORY OF RĀMĀNUJA

Indian culture and spiritualism were enshrined in temples which reminded people of their rich and varied heritage. It is here we find that the visible and the tangible form of the Lord of Creation is installed for the specfic purpose of worship by the devotees at large, to pray for a worthy and meaningful life in this world. It is a known fact that Indian tradition presents a great deal of philosophical thought reflecting about cultic life.

A study of an aspect of Indology involves a thorough understanding of the literary, archaelogical and religious works and their relevant materials. In the case of Vaişnavism inscriptional evidence does not play a very significant role, but the literary evidence is valuable. For a scholar trying to probe, the evidence may come across certain hurdles which block a direct interpretation. The Guruparaṁparās (line of teachers) contain a glorifying presentation of the preceptors dealt with in these works. Secondly, they were written long after the passing away of Śrī Rāmānuja. Thirdly, much of waht is handed down through oral tradition has no authenticity by way of external evidence. Fourthly, the authors of these works were not contemporaries of Rāmānuja, except Andhra purāṇa, one of his disciples, for his work "Yatirāja Vaibhava".[1] Other works are Rāmānuja Çampu (16th century) by one Rāmānujaçārya, Divya Sūri çarita by Garuḍavāhana Paṇdita, who might not have been a contemporary, but inherited this name as a title from the family he was born in. The Guruparaṁparā Prabhavam of Pin Palagiya Perumāl Jeer is also a work of the thirteenth century. Among these, the work of Andhrapurāṇa can be taken as authentic. though even in this there are certain statements which are not very valid e.g. 1,11,47, 52, 60, 62, 64, 71, 95, 81, 83, 84 and 105. 52 mentions Kurattālvān and Nadādur Alvān. Mudaliyandan is left out by Pin Palagīya Perumāl Jeer. There is no mention of Rāmānuja's supposed opposition or objections to the interpretation given by Tirumalai Andān for a passage in

1. V. Varadacharya - Yatiraja Vaibhavam.

Tiruvāimoli. There are references in this work and similar ones do not satisfactorily inform us about the life of Rāmānuja. Yet, these cannot be thrust aside as utterly useless.

To understand the milieu of eleventh century A.D., we must have a knowledge of that time. When Sanskrit culture came to the peninsula, Brahminism was not the only religion prevalent. Buddhism Jainism and Hinduism thrived in peaceful emulation. Then came a Hindu reaction, which was almost a counter reformation. The scholastic system of Jain and Buddhistic philosophy were almost crumbling, due to people's aversion. The early centuries of the Christian Era saw the growth of a powerful poetic literature in Tamil, which was the emotional expressions of the Alvārs and the Nayanmārs. They had the mastery of language and thought with a superior technique in poetry and music, and thus enraptured the masses. This was followed by an immense activity in temple building and popularisation of worship of idols.

The Pallava supremacy (second to eighth century) was of great help to this movement. The Alvārs were twelve in number. The most eminent of the Alvārs, the Vaiṣnava saints was Nammālvār or Śatakopa who authored the Tiruvāimoli (a thousand hymns). Both religion and philosophy blend beautifully in their songs.

These Alvārs were succeeded by a new group of Aragiyas or perceptors who consolidated the works of their predecessors and organised the Vaiṣnava sect internally for resisting any assault.

The emergence of Śankara in 800 A.D. was a landmark in the history of Indian philosophy. He accomplished the exposition of the monistic philosophy and supported it with reason. His work mainly consists of elaborate disquisition on the ten major Upanisads, the Gita and the Brahmasutra and also a commentary on the thousand names of Viṣṇu. His teaching is as follows. The ātman is one with the Brahman which is eternal and attributeless. That is the one and only reality and the phenomenal world is all illusory. The soul has its own qualities. In the innerself lies the knowledge of reality and unreality, which when fully understood ends the illusions and rebirth. One can attain the knowledge even in this life as Jivan mukta.

By the end of the tenth century, advaita became proof against assault with the Śaivaite Çōlās to supremacy in the

peninsula, the integrity of Śrī Vaiṣnavism came under threat, with the result the early Vaiṣnava açaryas were content to be on the defensive. The first of the preceptors Śrī Nātha or Nathamuni, a great yogin and author of two exinct works collected and collated the four thousand hymns of the Alvārs and set them to music to be recited as a part of the temple routine. His grandson Yāmuna, was an able administrator philosopher and made Srirangam his abode. He was a dialectician and a master of logical disputation and then stemmed the tide of advaita by controverting the theories of advaita, as Śankara rejected the Pāñcarātra on which Vaiṣnavism based its worship on the doctrine of avatāra - incarnation and prapatti (surrender). Yamuna identified the supreme being with Viṣṇu and explained the Gita as supporting the bhakti marga and he composed the brilliant summary of it in his Gitārtha Saṁgraha. He wanted a successor to his ambitious project and before his passing away was born, Rāmānuja nephew of Tirumalai Nambi or Śrī Śaila pūrṇa who was a grandson of Yāmuna. The date of Rāmānuja's nativity is placed in Saka 939 (A.D. 1017). This precocious child absorbed both the religious as well as the secular learning and was married at seventeen. Soon after the father died and Rāmānuja moved to Kāñçi to study under a bhedā bheda teacher by name Yādavaprakāśa. But very soon Rāmānuja challenged the teacher's interpretation of the Brahmasutras and the teacher treacherously thought of doing away with him. But with divine intervention Rāmānuja escaped to a safer place. Yamuna sent for him, but both of them could not meet. Rāmānuja came back to Kāñçi took Tirucaççi Nambi as his guru and was doing kaiṅkarya to Lord Varada. Kāñçi Pūrāṇa was a great devotee of Lord Varada and through him Rāmānuja got the following divine orders.

(1) The Lord declared that He is the ultimate Reality with Śrī.

(2) The self is distinct from God.

(3) Self-surrender is the means of obtaining mokṣa.

(4) There is no need for the self to remember God on the eve of its leaving the mortal body.

(5) Mokṣa is assured for the self.

(6) Mahāpūrṇa is the āçarya for Rāmānuja (Yatiraja Vaibhavam).[2] This illustrates how Rāmānuja obtained guidance from God in arça form.

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2. ibid 40

While Mahāpūrṇa was giving instructions to Rāmānuja on religious truths, the overbearing attitude of the pupil forced Mahāpūrṇa and his wife to leave Kāñçi for Srirangam. Rāmānuja thereupon resolved to abandon his wife to enter the order of ascetics. He took to sanyāsa, along with the triple staff and robes from Śrī Varadarāja[3].

Then he proceeded to Srirangam where he made his permanent abode. He was offering worship to the idol of Śrī Varadarāja ever since he started living at Kāñçi and continued that worship till the very end of his life. On one occasion, he had to enter into a debate with the advaitin, Yajñamurti, for reestablishing the genuine worth of his system of thought. He prayed earnestly to the idol of Śrī Varadarāja and vanquished the rival who became his disciple, assuming the name of Arulālapperumāl Emberumanār. Thus the Arça form of Śrī Varadarāja stood by Rāmānuja's side at all times, guiding him throughout his life. The life of Rāmānuja reveals that he was devoted to God in arça form and worked all his life for the maintenance of various shrines. Many of these shrines won high repute only because of his personal interest evinced in their maintenance and the steps he took to attend to the administration of those temples.

When Rāmānuja left the tutelage of Yādavaprakāṣa Yāmuna sent for him but by the time Rāmānuja arrived, Yāmuna had left his mortal coils and hence Rāmānuja promised to himself to fulfil the behests of Yāmuna. Yāmuna could not meet him. Some of Yāmuna's disciples taught Rāmānuja the teachings of Yāmuna. Peria Nambi, initiated him into the meaning of Dvaya mantra. Under Ghoṣtipūrṇa he learnt the Rahasya mantras which play a very important part in the life of a Śrī Vaiṣnava. The Tiruvāimoli was taught by Tirumalaiāndān and the Ramayana by his own uncle Tirumalai Nambi. The truths of Vaiṣnavism communicated by Lord Varada to Tirucaççi Nambi was also duly imparted to him. These are as given below.

"I am the supreme truth, the way and the goal. The world of souls is different from me and depends on me, as its source and sustenance. Prapatti is the way to salvation".

By this knowledge Rāmānuja became qualified to spread the Viṣistādvaitic Vaiṣnavism. In the course of his search for

3. ibid 50

enlightenment, embarassed by his domestic life he decided to become an ascetic which made his position unchallengeable. He moved at last to Srirangam as the chosen successor of Yāmuna and reigned the holy empire for ten years during which time, he was in full possession of his mental powers.

His initial task was to perfect himself for the post he held and then to organise the worship and rituals in the many Viṣṇu temples and make them strong spiritual centres. He made extensive tours to all places where his community lived and steadily accomplished both the tasks. Then he began the task of providing his sect with a philosophical literature to refute Sankara's advaita. For this he mastered old statements of the doctrines of the schools such as the extensivce gloss of Boḍhāyana and the commentary of Dramidāçārya on Brahmasutra and also similar works by Tanka, Guhadeva, Kapardin and Bharuchi which had all disappeared. Their disappearance necessitated the obligation on Rāmānuja to provide a commentary which would protect the value of the older interpretation, with his pupil Kūreśa he went to Kashmir and secured the manuscript of the Bodhayana Virtti which Kūreśa learnt by heart and enabled Rāmānuja to bring out his Śrī Bhāṣya and is said to have earned the title of Bhāṣyakāra from Saraswati herself. But this commentary was a work of years. It contains a verbal play suggesting Rāmānuja's cult (dependance of Sri for intercession) and this composition has no equal so far.

His comments on the Brahmasutra are non-sectarian. He wrote the Gita Bhāṣya which is the development of Yāmuna's Gitārtha Saṁgraha. For the ordinary run of his disciples he summarised his views on the Brahmasutras in a work vedārtha Saṁgraha and also the Nitya a manual of eternal duties and three prayers the Gadyatraya which he recited in the course of his daily worship.

He rebuilt the theory of monism by asserting that God is a synthetic unity consisting of animate and inanimate elements. Though equally ultimate matter and soul are dependent on Īśvara their relations to Him being like that of body and soul. Soul is a mode of the supreme and like Īśvara, is eternal, real, and changeless. God has both a causal and effectual relationship with soul and matter. It is the indivisibility of the effectual part from the causal which gets the name of Viśiṣṭādvaita. The three are in a quiescent condition when Īśvara withdraws them within Him in dissolution following each cyclic age, they maintain their

individuality but are unable to manifest till Īśvara starts his creative activity. The subtle matter takes on its grosser forms, souls enter into relations with the gross matter but union takes place according to the past action. Souls are masters of their own destiny and can redeem themselves by overcoming their bonds of karma. The way of release is by bhakti which is a reasoned devotion to God and which is attainable only by a life of arduous discipline. Bhakti is self rectifying and self nourishing. Rāmānuja fuses in bhakti the jñāna of adviata. With bhakti comes the release-moksha from rebirth. In the process the released soul does not lose its individuality but goes in communion with God like the Nitya Muktas. The freed soul differs in this state from the Lord only in its powerlessness to create, withdraw from the world and rule it as He alone can do. On the side of religion, the Brahman is Nārāyaṇa, embodiment of all good qualities. In the Pāñcarātra He is conceived as incarnation to be accessible to the yearning souls. The inherent tendency of bhakti is to universalise and democratise. Rāmānuja seeks a wider perspective for he admitted śudras into his sect. But bhakti involves a great amount of preparation. Therefore, Rāmānuja evolved a lesser way called prapatti which is the refuge for the refugeless.

If the seeker is convinced that he cannot master sādhanā (bhakti) because of his feebleness of knowledge and his failure to fulfil the śastra prapatti is the way for him. This is also known as bhara - samarpaṇam i.e. the humble transfer of the burden and responsibility on the part of humanity to God, to attain Him. In this the principal factor is the offering of one's self, his surrender and supplication to be accepted and redeemed. To the yearning soul, Rāmānuja gave hope of communion with a loving God, thereby all souls could gravitate towards God.

On the religious side he gave wide scope for diffusion of his message by organising temple worship on a sound basis. When he took charge of Yāmuna's affairs at Srirangam, he effected several reforms, and created offices in the temple for its better management. He also toured all over India restored many Vaiṣnava temples and converted large numbers to Śrī Vaiṣnavism. His administration obtained the title Udayavar Thittam, which was foccussed on Srirangam, Tirupati, Melukote and Kāṇçipuram the former three right under his supervision. Thus a powerful community of seventy four select leaders, seven hundred ascetics and twelve thousand disciples were by the

singular leadership of Rāmānuja under the Çōla empire between 1045- 1070. Five Chola Kings came to power and in 1070 Kulottunga I who was a Śaivaite endowed with masterly skill in administration, formed a centralised government. The Vaiṣnavas were ordered to subscribe to a statement that there was no God greater than Śiva. The punishment for not complying was corporal. Rāmānuja had to flee to Mysore, at this critical period and the venerable Mahāpūrṇa and Kūreśa, refused to change the faith and thus Kūreśa got his eyes plucked.

Rāmānuja went for asylum to Bittideva, the Hoysala Ballala King of Tondanur. As the King was the enemy of the Çōla king, he welcomed Rāmānuja, who in turn cured the King's daughter who was possessed. Then and there Bittideva embraced Vaiṣnavism, and became Rāmānuja's disciple. Hosts of converts were made of the Jains to Śrī Vaiṣnavism, five great shrines of Viṣṇu were dedicated by Rāmānuja including the great temple of Tiru Nārāyaṇa at Melukote. Rāmānuja was guiding his followers from Mysore and he returned to Srirangam in 1117 after Kulottunga's death to resume his ministry.

There was another incident of the outbreak of fanaticism. The crown prince Kulottunga II in A.D. 1127 descecrated the Viṣṇu shrine at Chidambram. Rāmānuja removed the image to Tirupati, where a separate shrine was built for Govindarāja.

For another ten years, he lived a peaceful life having seen his work firm on its ground and yielding results. The Śrī Vaiṣnava community was stronger than ever it was. All Viṣṇu temples reverberated the benediction, "May the commands of Rāmānuja ever gain in strength". In 1137 amidst sorrowing disciples, he left the mortal coil in 1137. Rāmānuja is a philosopher saint for all times who by personal example and precept showed that how by dedicated service to God, human redemption can be achieved and this post of serving the God of mercy and guiding his people "the souls that they had lost", for he stands unique. His dynamic influence is still ever on the increase even after centuries of his passing away, since he served God, faithfully and well.

ŚRI RĀMĀNUJA'S WORKS

To know about the life of Rāmānuja the following are the sources. (1) Divya Suri çarita - Garuḍavāhana Paṇdita (2) Guruparamparā Prabhavam by Pin Palagiya Perumāl Jiyar (3) Rāmānujaçārya Divya Charitam by Pillai Lokam Jiyar (4) Peria

Tirumudi Adaivu by Anpillai Kandādaiappan (5) Prapannāmṛta by Anantāçārya (6) The Commentaries of Tiruvāimoli telling of reminiscences of Aragias and other epigraphical records.

His Magnum Opus Śrī Bhāṣya is a theistic commentary on the Vedanta sūtras. His comment on the very first sūtra is itself a long essay, that it is deemed as the summary of all of Rāmānuja's philosophy. It systematically refutes all schools of thought both hetrodox as well as orthodox other than Viśiṣṭādvaita. He is said to have been given the title Bhāṣyakāra (commentator) by Goddess Saraswati in Kashsmir, which title remained with his followers especially the Vadagalai sect. Rāmānuja believed that the Vedānta sūtras correctly summarised the Upanisads and he brought his own thought into conformity with that of the sūtras. Here the subject matter is divided into three parts - tattva (ontology) the nature of Brahman and other entitles, hita the means to attain Him and Puruṣārtha the nature of man's supreme goal. The first two padās of the second Adhyāya take up refutations of the rival systems, the third and the fourth padas are concerned with the details of the process of creation. The third adhyaya deals with the means of meditation - the various devotional disciplines and the fourth with the result of the meditation, release from transient existence, the enjoyment of the soul's inherent powers and the bliss of eternal communion with God.

Even from the first chapter which is considerably lengthy, we can learn a great deal about the concept of God which is used as an introduction to his entire commentary.

While agreeing with Śankara that the fruits of religious acts are limited and only the knowledge of the Brahman can bring eternal bliss, Rāmānuja disagrees about the nature of knowledge. He knows the cause of avidya - the power of karma. By religious acts one cannot ward off Karma, but by performing one's social and religious duties knowledge can be gained and karma be destroyed. The necessity of the study of Vedic rituals is affirmed for without an insight into the nature of these works, we would not know about the works not aiming at an immediate result but meant to please the Highest person bring about the knowledge of devout meditation and the unlimited and permanent result of the intuition of the Brahman as the self of all[4]. Many basic tenets

4. Carman - The Theology of Rāmānuja

of Hinduism find place here. Rāmānuja handles the subject with great care and quotes many pramānas supporting his arguments.

The principal commentary on this Bhāṣya is the Sruta Prakāśika by Sudarsana Suri which insists on the unity of all Brahma Vidyas and it is the intention of the Sūtrakāra to include prapattiyoga among the important means to mokṣa. It focusses Rāmānuja's view that the Upanisads were a collection of authoritative texts which must be reconciled through the correct interpretation. The other commentaries on these works are : Śrī Bhāṣya Vivīiti by Rāma Miṣra Deśika and Tulikā by Vādula Śrīnivāsa, Tattvasāra by Vātsya Varada, Tattvatika by Vedānta Deśika, Nyaya Prakāśika by Meghanādri.

The Vedāntha Saṁgraha - is the earliest of Rāmānuja's works. This is confirmed by the fact that it is being mentioned several times in the Śrī Bhāṣya. Rāmānuja expounded it before the Lord Śrīnivāsa of Tirupati. This work is of medium length. Commenting on various topics that Rāmānuja felt must be understood to grasp the true meaning of the Upanisads. Two basic metaphysical relations are i.e. the unchanging Brahman is the material cause of the changing universe and he ensouls it as its innerself (śarīrī). When the scriptures are rightly understood they prove that Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa) is the supreme deity.

The first part of this work is a commentary on a Upanisadic text. The other parts are also commentaries on some crucial texts which provide solutions to the questions taken up.

This wish embodies both the philosophical knowledge and the act of worship. The time of this work is not very certain, but it is to be noted that it's commentaries on various topics Rāmānuja felt must be rightly understood in the light of the true meaning of the Upanisad. This is claimed to be the most systematic work of Rāmānuja. It may be rightly called the summary of the meaning of Vedas. Rāmānuja has refuted the rival position on the basis of one text that Sadvidya (knowledge derived from the meditation on being) in Çandogya Upanishad. He establishes that the unchanging Brahman is the material and cause of the changing universe and he ensouls it as its innerself (Śarīrī). Rāmānuja draws an explanation as to how scriptures bring about the same meaning. And when rightly the scriptures are understood it is proved that Nārāyaṇa is the supreme deity. Aikyaveda or the philosophy of identity as contained in the texts - "Through out

that affirms the unity of the self and its Śarīra the whole truth therein lies that as the innerself or ātman of the jīva is Brahman. It is Rāmānuja's unshaken view that all the Sākhās of the Veda and Vedānta have the unity of Brahman as their purpose. Moreover it is said that god has a transcendental bodily form, bhakti is a knowledge of god and also a state of service to Him. In a critical summary in the Vedānta Sangraha, Rāmānuja concludes that this view is a reconciliation of the extremes of Vedāntha doctrines like the different schools of Abheda, Bhadabheda and bheda.

However, the difference of Vedāntha Sangraha from the other wishes is the first part, a commentary on the central Upaniṣdic texts which provides a solution to the particular question taken up. Rāmānuja proves the particular point by refuting the particular objection. In this manner the Śrīvaiṣnava tradition evolves. In fact, the Vedānta Sangraha is the most systematic work of Rāmānuja.

The Vedānta Sāra is Rāmānuja's first work whenever it was written, it was not to convince the opposing school but only to instruct Śrī Vaiṣnava disciples in the early stages of study. Nevertheless it can be called as Carmen feels that this work is a key to Rāmānuja's objection to other schools, as they don't affirm the majesty and perfection of God.

The Gita Bhāṣya: This is second in length among Rāmānuja's works. According to Buitenan,[5] here he does not define or establish the purport. For Rāmānuja, the Gita is an authoritative scripture laying the tenets of faith and teaching the ways of life and realisation and his interpretation is in terms of Viśiṣṭādvaita. If in Śrī Bhāṣya and Vedānta Samgraha, Rāmānuja refers to earlier thinkers like Bodhayana, Tanka, Dramida, so far as the Gita Bhāṣya is concerned. Rāmānuja is indebted to Yāmuna's Gitārtha Saṁgraha. There is nothing in his commentary which departs from Yāmuna's Gitārtha Samgraha. Two sides of Divine nature as supremacy and accessibility is more evident in this work than any other of Rāmānuja's. Jñāna and karmayoga are preparatory stages which result in the "Contemplation of the atman" but not in the attainment of god, whereas he can be attained by bhakti alone. The rituals are only propitiations; The contemplation of the ātman is ancillary to the attainment of God

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5 Von Buitenen - Ramānuja on the Bhagavad Gita, p.9-12

through bhakti. The claim of Gita to teach the way of redemption to all strengthen the case for prapatti being regarded as the essence of the Lord's instruction. The traditional bhakti yoga is allowed only to those entitled to study the Veda. But the Gita reaches out to those lacking qualification presented in bhakti yoga and the Gita is interpreted as teaching prapatti. This Bhāṣya proceeds throughout to explain the teachings of the Lord to inspire selflessness, service to fellow men and devotion to God. The merit of this work is that it is clear, cogent and consistent. It furnishes valuable insights to those who seek inspiration and information.

A wonderful commentary by Vedānta Deśika by name Tātparya Chandrikā is a valuable study on this work. It reflects and reveals the spirit of Rāmānuja's teachings as handed down in unbroken oral tradition. It claims an equal status with Śruta Prakāśikā for its clear and lucid style.The Gita Bhāṣya shows Rāmānuja's mature reflection for its testimony to his genius of deriving the concept of Ubhaya Vedānta and how he himself was a jnani described therein.

The Gadyatraya: These are prose hymns. The first one known as the Śaraṇāgatigadya is a model of complete surrender to the mercy of god since the act of surrender became the major point of dispute between the Vadagalai and Tenkalai sects, these three gadyas also became a devotional exercise and a field for controversy. In the first gadya Rāmānuja prays for forgiveness for his sins. In the last part the Lord grants him whatever he wants.

The second one Sriranga gadya is a short prayer of surrender to the feet of Lord Ranganātha to accept him as his eternal servant.

The third the Vaikuṅtha gadya which describes the eternal abode of Viṣṇu and which is to be chanted after the act of prapatti. It is infact a spiritual discipline. The speciality of this gadya is that it has a mangala śloka, in praise of Yāmuna and is modelled on Yāmuna's Stotra Ratna.

The Nityagrantha is a manual for daily worship intended for an individual in his home or math but not in the temple. It makes references to the gadyas and has little doctrinal material. It is just a manual of worship for the prapanna without undergoing the devotional meditation of the Upanisads.

These works are as valuable as Rāmānuja's life and we may call them as fulfilment of his promise to carry the message of Yāmuna to systematise Viśiṣṭādvaita in its metaphysical and mystical aspect. They are everlasting monuments of Rāmānuja's synthetic genius.

ŚRI RĀMĀNUJA'S PHILOSOPHY

This chapter delineates the great task of Rāmānuja in blending the agamas and the Prabandhas with his philosophy to give a meaningful whole of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. For this we may consider the central doctrines of his philosophy.

(1) Brahman is saguṇa.

(2) He possesses innumerable auspicious qualities and He is free of any kind of blemish.

(3) He is Nārāyaṇa alone..

(4) The animate and the inanimate world and the Brahman stand in the relation of body and soul.

(5) The means of attaining God is by faith - bhakti, and prapatti (self-surrender).

(6) Brahmānubhava marks the state of mokṣa. The Prasthānatrayi, (The Brahmasūtras, Upaniṣads and the Gītā) contain the essentials of the Viśiṣṭādvaita theory of Rāmānuja. He evolved the above mentioned first two doctrines from the Brahmasūtras and the Upaniṣads.If Brahman is amala or free from all defects, often referred to as being heya prajavika opposed to the nature of blemish, means that not only He is by nature free from all blemishes but also is capable of removing blemishes in others. These five qualities - Satyam, Gnānam, Anantam, Ānandam and Amalam are known as *Svarūpa nirūpaka dharma,* since they define the nature of Īśvara and distinguish Him from all others.

The other perfect and auspicious qualities are known as nirūpita Svarūpaviśeṣas that are in Him when His qualities are defined. If knowledge and strength are svarūpa guṇas, beauty, fragrance and lustre are vigraha guṇas, they are natural to Him and are of unsurpassed excellence. He manifests any of these qualities as the occasion demands e.g. knowledge and power while creating the world, mercy and kindness when he saves the devotees.

The five defining attributes are not to be considered as five qualities of the same order. Gnāna is the fundamental attribute and is identical with the essential nature of Brahman (jnanikaswarūpa (Solely conscious). An analysis of one of the essential attributes which compares with the happiness of the finite selves establishes His Paratva.

He is connoted by all words as He is the inner soul of all the substances sarva śabda varya. This is due to the unique doctrine of the body-soul relationship *sāriraasārira bhāva-saṁbandha* which exists between Brahman and other things. He is the substratum and matter and self are attributes owing to the entry of Paramātman into the jivan as Aṅtaryāmin or inner ruller; the evolution of names and forms and all terms denote the body of the Brahman; connotes the Paramātman or the Sarīri. As all substances and Īśvara are thus vitally related as body and soul, they are coordinated into the Brahman. In fact this concept stresses the intimacy between the Brahman and the jīvan, hence the connotation *sarva sabdha Varya*.

The Gītā Bhāṣya is essentially of the same nature as that of Vedāntasaṁgraha and the Śrībhāṣya but a little different. Here he dwells upon the devotional and emotional aspects of the continuous representation of God. The aspects of God's nature in redeeming the devotee to bring him in communion with Him. The attributes of supremacy and accessibility is more evident here.

The last major work of Rāmānuja is an important link between the purely philosophical works and the commentaries on the Vedāntasūtras. It shows Rāmānuja's mature reflection, its testimony to his genius for Ubhaya Vedānta since he was the one wholly devoted and dependent on Him.

In the introduction to Gītābhāṣya, in the first half the Lord is described as the Supreme Person (Being who causes the origination, continuance and dissolution of the cosmos), which change does not touch Him. The second half indicates His actions. Without losing His own inherent nature He has descended in lower forms to be accessible when worshipped. He grants them their prayers. His immediate purpose is to get rid of evil doers and captivate men's hearts by compelling them to surrender by devotion and to accomplish their salvation.

The later āçārya, Deśika's commentary holds good the view that four terms at the end of the introduction sum up the entire

nature of the Lord namely Paratva - Soulabhya, Upakśti, Margeśa, Āsrita Vātsalya, Vivaśah. The usage Paratva depicts both the ideas of Supremacy and Lordship yet accessible. The third term defines the Lord's action as a creator and Himself becoming a mortal for helping the Universe. The fourth term explains his Grace which forgives and protects those who have sought refuge in Him.

Going in detail the term 'Paratva' occurs three times in Śrībhāṣya through which Rāmānuja clearly indicates one or more dimensions of the Divine Supremacy, mattah - Paratvam. As Lord Himself explains "Because I am the cause of both the natures, I am the 'śeṣī'[6] even of the intelligent beings 'śeśins'. I am superior Paratva. Because I possess such qualities as universal knowledge, creative power, untiring strength. I am superior and there is nothing whatsoever distant from Me which could be superior by possessing such qualities".

One notices the absence of the term soulabhya in Rāmānuja's work sulabha means easily accessible. The word Sulabha appears in his comment on Gītā 8.14.

"For the one who constantly remembers me and never lets his thoughts stray by fundamental force is Rāmānuja's conception of the deity". Later açāryas have used the terms Paratva and soulabhya to indicate these two aspects which are not only attributes but they are categories, the two poles of the Divine Nature[7] around which these auspicious qualities can be grouped. According to Carman, Rāmānuja sees this polarity as an equilibrium.

It is the view of the later āçārya, Vedānta Deśika that if the Lord is Merciful and not autonomous, then He might not be able to save an individual soul even when He desires.

"The compassion of one, not autonomous is of no help to others but brings pain. But on the other hand, the compassion of one who is autonomous, since he can accomplish whatever he intends is both delightful and allows him to remove their pain and grant their desires[8].

It requires to be seen how the qualities are demonstrated in the world, how they function in salvation. The āçāryas delight

6. Śrībhāṣya - 3.2.35, 3.2.37
7. Patricia Mumme - The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute
8. Ibid - Page 189 - Rahasyatrayasara, Page 23

iemselves in dwelling on the paradox of how the same Lord /ho rules the universe with unquestionable might, stoops to erve and to be served, placing Himself at the disposal of His .evotees. It is in the arçāvatāra where he takes the inanimate ody and depends on His devotees for food, clothing (seems to e the extreme limits of His supremacy).

Rāmānuja has classified the gunas or the aspects under two .eads which may be called absolute and relative respectively. He .olds that the conception of God endowed with all qualities is ssential to all forms of meditation. Truth, consciousness, bliss, 'urity and infinity are fundamental qualities while compassion nd others are relative ones.

The Fundamental Attributes : Brahman is spoken of as mniscient only when knowledge is considered to be one of his ttributes, because knowledge presupposes the knower and the nown. Rāmānuja believed that consciousness and knowledge re synonymous. Rāmānuja takes knowledge to be essentially elated to the self. According to his philosophy, the idea that an ıdividual's soul and that the mind of the working person goes way and that of a sleeping one returns suggests that the ıdividual soul resides in the heart[9] whereas its attributes, and onsciousness go even beyond to external objects through the ense organs[10].

Thus Rāmānuja puts forward the instances of gem and the un etc. who remain at one place but emit their rays far[11]. Thus t is established that god is omniscient, His knowledge is nmediate in as much as it does not depend upon the function f the sense organs as does knowledge in the case of individual ouls.

Bliss : Bliss is like lustre in a gem, sweetness of sugar, ıeat in fire etc.. It has its grade. Taittriya Upaniṣad enumerates t as starting from the human and ending into the divine. ːāmānuja clearly says that Brahman is characterized as nandamaya. Mayat indicates profuseness or abundance and not ransformation. Rasa is also another name for him[12].

Bhashya - Philosophy of Rāmānuja, Page 121.
). Hṛdayadese
l. Śrībhāṣyam - 2.3.25
ː. ibid - 2.3.26

Truth : The changing universe rests in God, so is called 'sat'. He is the Real of the Reals.

Purity: Brahman is free from all imperfections of the empirical world. e.g. Pleasure, Pain, old age, death.

Infinity : He transcends time and space 'anańta

Attributes in relation to the Universe : The whole creations rest on Him. He holds back all creations in Him at the time of dissolution.

Power - 'Bala' : The quality with which God supports the universe is called bala[13].

Prowess - Virya : Freedom from transmutation is vīrya. He is above any change and hence nirvikāra[14].

Energy - Śakti : He can turn anything into any other thing. The Upaniṣad says that the Supreme energy of God is multipervious.

Overlordship - Aiśvarya : He keeps all things under his control ruling over sentient and non-sentient beings.

The Bṛhadāraṇya says that He is master of all beings.

Infallible resolve : 'Drudavrata' countless things are accomplished by his resolve.

Sweetness - Mādhurya : He is the most pleasant and agreeable.

The sages loved the Real and were happy to call It by the names and light. But one must not mistake it with the life and light of the material world. Rāmānuja in his commentary reiterates this point[15].

Compassion : 'Karuṇā' prompts God to do good and grant salvation. The northern school or Vaḍakalais conceived this guṇa as the desire to remove the pain of the devotee and the southern school or the Tenkalais as the experience of the pain of the afflicted. So there is a point of dispute here.

Mildness of Disposition : Mṛudutva – Śrī Kṛṣṇa says. I would not be able to bear the separation of my lovers from me[16].

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13. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad - 3.2.21
14. Vīra
15. Brahmasutra - 1.1.28 Śrībhāṣya - 2.2.28, 2.2.22
16. Gītā Bhāṣya - 8.14

This indicates how soft and delicate He is not able to stand the pangs of separation.

Sincerity - Arjava : Uniformity of thought, action and speech[17]

Cleverness - Çāturya : Skill of concealing the shortcomings of the devotees[18].

Before looking at the attributes in relation to individual souls in particular a knowledge of the actions of Śrī Viṣṇu in the avatāras is essential.

Avatāras create stories. Their intention is to elaborate the Bhagavat Guṇas. Even the Vedas are full of stories. But the Mimamsakas reject these as arthavāda. When Vedic stories are rejected even the puranas have no chance of survival. But Rāmānuja says that like the Vedic stories arthavāda is also real. Thus avatāras became meaningful. This is only one view of a particular scholar.

The fifth in the order of defining attributes of the Brahman is Purity i.e. amalatva. Stainlessness or free from imperfection *nireste nikhila - doṣa - gandhan.*

Bliss and other things do not suggest Brahman's distinctive character since they also belong to the finite self. What are peculiar to Brahman are often essential attributes which are opposed to evil or defiling (Heyapraya). To be opposed to evil is to have a character opposed to grossness and other similar qualities of the empirical world in both material and intelligent aspects[19]. At the same time, immateriality is a superficial definition of amalatva.

The Upaniṣadic term nirguṇa according to advaita refers to the absolute nature of the Brahman grasped at the higher level of knowledge whereas Rāmānuja denies that there is anything higher than the Lord of auspicious qualities and He applies both saguṇa with qualities and nirguṇa also to the Supreme Person. Nirguṇa pertains to the negation of the defiling qualities of material nature.

The next attribute is Equality - Sauṁya, which means being adorable by one and all irrespective of creed and caste[20].

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17. Text of Footnote
18. ibid
19. Śrībhāṣyam - 3.3.33, Page 333

Affection: - Vātsalyam : This is the aspect which refers to the quality of not taking into consideration the imperfections and regarding demerits as merits.

Friendliness : - He is the eternal friend of the individual souls[21]. Rāmānuja says that all people move forward to adore friends[22].

Excellence of Disposition : Souśīlya - This is the quality of being affable to inferiors. He comes down to live amongst persons of low status and sports with least reserve.

Generosity : - Audārya: Śrī Kṛṣṇa attitude towards Draupadi in supplying raiments and to Kuçela in showering prosperity stand as good examples to this particular quality.

Firmness - Sthairya: This quality is brought out clearly in the Rāmāyaṇa[23] when Rāma finding Lakṣmaṇa wounded did not care for the arrows on his body but relieving his brother of the missiles on his body.[24]

Valour - Śaurya: This is the capacity to enter into hostile forces.

Heroism - Parākramam : Subjugating the hostile is the quality which is depicted in the victory of Rāma over Rāvaṇa in the battle field.

Gratitude - Kratajnata: This is enunciated in Rāma's attitude towards Hanuman on finding Sītā's safety and whereabouts[25].

Assurance of Protection - Śaraṇyata: This means assurance of safety, assuring fearlessness to those who surrender. This quality assures the devotee of His Grace.

Fortitude: - Dhairya: It is the mental power in meeting dangers and keeping up promises facing any difficulty.

Redressal or Removal of Affliction - Arti Harata: The story of Gajendra and his mokṣa as explained in Bhāgavata is an example of this quality[26].

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20. Gītābhāṣya - 9.29
21. Ṛg Veda - 1.164.20
22. Gītābhāṣyam - L-23
23. Ramayana - 9.2.24
24. Text of Footnote
25. Bhāgavata Purāṇa - VIII Chapter
26. Bliss indeed is He, having attained the very same the individual self becomes blissful. For He himself causes bliss. *Raso Vai Sah. Rasam hyeragam labdhva anandi bhavati eshahyana anandyanti.* Page 11.7.1 - Taittiriya Upanisad.

Vigour - Tejas : An attribute in which one dominates over others.

Attainability with ease : Saulabhya - This refers to being easy to attain for one who yearns for eternal union with Him. We have already noted that this quality is explained very well by later āçāryas and there is nothing wrong in accepting this.

Now we may take into consideration Viṣṇu Purāṇa which lays stress on six attributes viz. - compassion, power, prowess, energy, valour and overlordship and alternatively refers to overlordship, compassion, renown, lustre and renunciation. It tells that the collective group of these attributes is called 'bhaga' and one who possesses these is called Bhagavān. Rāmānuja's view also tallies with these. It is Kureśa's talent which had added the latter six as they appealed to him. The views held by Rāmānuja are in consonance with scriptural texts, praising Indra in Viṣṇupurāṇa. "Even Brahma cannot describe you exhaustively".

Going back to the definition of 'Brahman', the Taittriya Upaniṣad offers the definition of the Brahman. Satyam, gnānam, anantam. According to Rāmānuja, Brahman is unconditionally existent, omniscient and infinite. Gnānam is not mere knowledge but means knowing the self whose knowledge has no limitations. Anantam means Brahman has no spatial bounds and there is nothing other than Brahman which He does not maintain its existence as his dwelling soul. It even signifies infinitude of perfections.

The purport of the Taittriya Upaniṣad is to declare the blissful nature of Brahman. Brahman is Ānanda or bliss in itself and it also imparts Ānanda to Its devotees[27].

Thus the reality spoken of as Brahman is shown as immanent in all existence as the sustaining ground and is characterized by exalted qualities of perfection[28].

The entire Nārāyaṇīya exegesis is found in Rāmānuja's Vedānta Saṅgraha (Page 210) and also is found in his Śrī bhāṣya III 3.43. It is assured that he reads in to the vedānta, the concept of Nārāyaṇa, gathered from the body of Upaniṣadic revelation that Nārāyaṇa is Highest deity, the Supreme reality with all perfections. The fundamental purport of the Upaniṣads is the

27. Chandogya Upaniṣad - S.S.R, Page 37
28. Vidyārthi Page 21.

proclamation of the Supreme Brahman in all His inexhaustible perfections and glories. He is the redemptive power and all attributes constitute of Grace are to be attributed to the Brahman.

In short Brahman of the Upaniṣads is the *paratatva parāhita, parama puruṣārtha.*

The Supreme Reality, the Supreme way to redemption and the Supreme Goal. The whole teaching of the Upaniṣads stands summed up in a supreme synthesis in the concept of 'Nārāyaṇa'. Thus the exposition of Brahman and Its definitions lead to the genesis of religion which is a means of directing the man to the Supreme knowledge.[29]

The Nature and Genesis of Religion : It is the total knowledge and orientation of man to the Supreme Reality, that is the subject of any interpretation of religion. Regarding the knowledge of infinite and universal reality known as God, we cannot in our consciousness of Him appropriate to ourselves His qualities, His infinitude, if our apprehension of Him is devoid of the universal features characteristic of thought.[30]

God is universal and our aspiration for communion with Him is the very sum and substance of religious relationship; we must cast aside our private narrow-self for that. Religion is life itself and it is an autonomous activity unity behind the whole universe including all conscious and inner elements.[31]

He evolved the above mentioned first two doctrines from the Brahma Sūtras and the Upanisads. According to Dr.V.Varadacarya, the 4th doctrine is evolved from the Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad. bhakti prapatti find their seeds in the Gītā.[32]

There is a view that Rāmānuja had no inclination for the devotional element, while refuting the advaitic theories and refer to the same sources as Śaṅkara, which involved most of his time.[33] But his later works, Gadyatraya and Nityā, explicitly show his fervour for the contents of the āgamas as well as the works of the Ālvārs. The Ahirbudhnya Saṁhita gives a very clear

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29. P.N. Srinivasacarya - The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita, Page - XXXIII
30. ibid
31. Carman - The Theology of Rāmānuja.
32. Bharadwaj - Philosophy, Page 233-34.
33. Vedānta Saṅgraha - Page 137.

account of the Brahman. The Lakṣmī Tantram mentions Brahman as Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa. The agamas exerted profound influence on the Ālvār's compositions which inspired Nāthamuni and his grandson Yāmuna. Yāmuna's Stotra Ratna is almost a Sanskrit version of the Ālvār's treatment of God's qualities. This must have influenced Rāmānuja most, who in turn bought out the Gradyatraya and the Gītābhāṣya. The sculpture and Architecture suggested in the agamas must have also inspired both Yāmuna and Rāmānuja in the worship of the icon. Though the Vedas do not much refer to Śrī or Lakṣmī, She gets an important position in the āgamas, which was assimilated in the Purāṇas and later by the Ālvārs. Yāmuna's Çatusloki and Rāmānuja's Saraṇāgatigadya bear evidence to this.[34]

This agama concept of God as para, vyūha, vibhava and arça antaryāmin, the essence of the agamas and also the works of the Ālvārs have influenced Yamuna's Stotraratna. The Alwars also speak of these five forms in an interrelated manner.[35] Rāmānuja must have believed in the arça, which treats God as the ultimate reality after consecration and installation, according to the agamic norms. These āgamas recommend an integrated course for mokṣa. Along with the karma, jñāna and bhakti yogas, prapatti is recommended as the fourth means. Since the arça is recommended for worship in the agamas, it becomes evident that devotion (bhakti) forms the basis for worship. Prapatti is most stressed in Ahir budhnya Saṁhita and Lakṣmī Tantram as a most sure means[36], of man's salvation. But Rāmānuja seems to be influenced more by the agamas. It is not out of place to mention here, that even Vyāsa talks highly of the agamas in the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata.

The Vedānta system comprises of two aspects namely, philosophy and Religion. We may say though Rāmānuja did not show the influence of āgamas in any of his works, his Gadyatraya and Nitya speak of the efficacy of prapatti in the daily worship of God, in which the upaçāras, āsanas, bhūtaśuddhi and use of āgama mantras with hastramudras like surabhi, which owe their origin to the Pāñcarātra āgama.

The Ālvārs occupy an important position in the history of Vaiṣṇavism. There is basically not much difference between the

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34. Chandogya Upaniṣad - Page 8.1.5
35. Carman - Page 174.
36. Mahābhārata - Śānti Parva - Ch. 337 - 375.

Vedic mystics and the Ālvārs. Both experienced Truth in its wholeness. The hymns of the Ālvārs are considered as exact paraphrases of the Vedic hymns. For example, Tiruvāimoli means the word of God and Nammālvār was convinced that in singing, the hymns it was indeed not he but the Lord himself sang. Moreover, it is an exact concretisation of the abstract principle of the Sāma Veda.

Vedānta Deśika eulogises this work as the Dramiḍopaniśad. It is said that a later commentator Sudarśana Sūri was also attracted by these hymns.

Rāmānuja studied under the five disciples of Yāmuna.Realising the intellectual and love content of these songs, after learning these from Tirumalaiyānḍan, Rāmānuja acquired a deep acquaintance of the Tamil Prabandham.

Though Nāthamuni collected these and divided them into four parts, Rāmānuja thought it best to build the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition of religion on the basis of Ālvār's experiences. Thus He not only learnt these hymns, he introduced these texts to infuse in the public, an interest in their regular study.

This was accomplished by his effort to have caused commentaries on the 4000. The first one was the Ārāyirappaḍi the 6000, written by his disciple Pillān. Further on the 9000, 36000 and the like were written by the disciples of the disciple of Rāmānuja. By means of lectures in the temple precincts, the message of Ālvārs was passed to the ordinary people. Thus in later years, Rāmānuja is praised as the foster mother to the prabandham and Nammālvār as the mother[37].

In due course of time, Rāmānuja's system got the complexion from the Ālvār legacy. Many ideas of the Ālvārs must have exerted their influence on His system, śeṣa the identification of the jivātman in the dāsabhāvam-servanthood (seṣatva) as the essential attribute of the soul.

Rāmānuja's Śaraṇāgati Gadya and Vaikuṇṭha Gadya are soaked in the rapture of prapatti (self-surrender). The essential quality is vātsalya as replete in Tiruvāimoli. Thus we find His religion was systematised greatly by the influence of the hymns of the Ālvārs and he was credited with the title of Ubhaya Vedānta, Pravartakāçārya, one who established the tradition of

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37. Rangachari - The Glory of the Tamil Prabandhas.

the two- fold Vedānta, i.e. the (Drāviḍa and Sanskrit). Another advantage was that by this effort the Drāviḍa Vaiṣṇava tradition received philosophic sanction to be accepted in the intellectual as well as the non-intellectual public. In his interpretations, he seems to have discovered universal elements to be infused into the powers of human understanding. We are aware of the existence of god though having no capacity to make our consciousness of Him explicit[38]. In the reflection on the theoretical principles involved in the knowledge of the world, he rises to the awareness of the Self and God.

The Vedic hymns like the Puruṣa Sūkta, the Upaniṣads, the Brahma Sūtra and the Gītā, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, the Vedānta Purāṇa - all these form the bulk of Śānti literature and is the major source of Rāmānuja's conception of spirituality. In addition, Rāmānuja subscribes to the supplementary source of the Pāñcarātra āgamas, the heritage of which was the Vedic piety mating into the crux of the Upaniṣads and focussing the spiritual reality as Brahman, the way to realise it through the tenets of the Gītā whose prime factor is Bhakti or devotion. The Pāñcarātra adds the necessary supplement by analysing the aspects of the Brahman with the practical way of daily living.

In addition to these sankritic streams of inspiration. Rāmānuja inherited a rich collection of the Drāviḍa Veda, the Divine 4000. Their varied phases of God-hunger and spiritual attainment, which gave Him an additional source of authority for his tradition of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Thus we find during his tenure as administrator of temples, he started the practical aspect of Ubhaya Vedānta, both in philosophy and religion and even got deified the Ālvārs in the temples, alongwith their chanting daily as well as on festive occasions and gave them their due respect.

Even in his major works, the Śrībhāṣya, Gītābhāṣya etc, Rāmānuja has incorporated the essential ideas of the great works of the Ālvārs.

His maṅgala śloka at the beginning of the Śrī\bhāṣya reads this :

Akhila-bhuvana, janma - sthema, bhangādi - lile.

The three fold functions of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa are well brought out here. They are creation, sustenance and destruction

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38 Vidyarthi - Early Indian Religious Thoughts - Page 216.

of the universe. Again Rāmānuja repeats Vinata - Vividha - bhūta vśata - rakṣaika - dīkśe.

Tiruvāimoli - *Elivārumiyalvinan* (1-32) This stanza speaks of the limitless auspicious qualities of the Brahman - *nilaimaiya - thozhivilan,* meaning the Brahman also possesses the unique quality of granting the spotless status of Eternal Bliss or mukti.

Rāmānuja must have been inspired by this special treatment of the Brahman's quality, so he must have mentioned it again in the second line after it has already been connoted by the term stheman in the first line. On the basis of the Śrībhāṣya, which emphasises the importance of the Pāñcarātra Samhitas and on the earlier reference to them by Yāmuna. Krishnawamy Iyengar upholds that the Vedic character of Pāñcarātra works claimed to be based on Vedas was derived from ekāyana or Yajur Veda. The periods from 600 A.D. to 1000 is partly rich in resources for the Vaiṣṇava iconography in the Tamil Country. The major concepts must have evolved during this period a subsequent development must have been going on. Sri Rāmānuja was an adept in conciliatory approach, changing the dry philosophy to a beautiful God with all suspicious attributes and infinite grace. In Vedantic tradition, it is said that Rāmānuja is the only philosopher who made an attempt to unify the Brahman of the Upaniṣads with the personal God of the Purāṇas. Being a great mystic, he conceived of God beautifully with auspicious qualities and made Him the most enjoyable one. In sympathy with the common man, he brought the transcendental truth towards human thinking by making the personal God with an impersonal background nearer to mankind. His main aim and compassion for the masses are reflected in each and every branch of metaphysical thinking and supplemented by a humanistic approach. The love for God which Rāmānuja preached later developed as the 'bhakti mārga' of the north. Rāmānuja accepts the Vaiṣṇava doctrines that the Lord is united with His divine consort. In the dedicatory verse of Rāmānuja's three commentaries on the Vedānta Sūtras, He is known as Śrīnivasa (in whom Śrī dwells) in Śrībhāṣya, Śrīmat (associated with) in Vedānta Sāra and Śrīyah Kānta (blessed consort) in Vedānta Dīpa.

There are also references to her in Gītābhāṣya and more references in the Gadyatraya and Nityagrantha. The split that came later among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, one called that of Northern recension considered her as the first of the finite spirits. Rāmānuja

calls her mahiṣi - queen of matchless glory with respect to her beautiful form, nature and manifestations. In the Vedānta Sangraha, Rāmānuja quotes phrases from the Sruti. "Hrī and Lakṣmī are thy consorts" (patnian) when Viṣṇu is in the form of God. She has the body of God. The later commentators interpret the surrender to Śrī at the beginning of the Śaraṇāgati Gadya as mother. Sudarśana Sūri, the ace commentator of the Śrībhāṣya, says that because the Lord is difficult to approach, as He has the father's sternness, Śrī is full of vātsalya and hence becomes an intercessor - (Puruṣakāra)[39] as a forging mother to intercede and persuade the stern father to forgive.

Its first paragraph implies that Śrī is the mediatrix of salvation. Yāmuna has cleared it in his Çatuśloki, Rāmānuja follows Yāmuna in all his doctrines. He addresses her as "Thy very name is Śrī, denoting splendour and prosperity". The Lord is the source of all excellences only because Śrī is His consort. In the Vedānta Saṅgraha, Rāmānuja established that Viṣṇu has a consort pleasing to Him and in accordance with His nature.[40] Both Yāmuna and Rāmānuja wanted to guard against the consort being conceived as the immanent power in material nature, who is in some sense over the transcendent deity. Their successors have remained faithful to their teaching at this point. But they laid more emphasis in their writings on Śrī.

The foremost disciple of Rāmānuja, Kūreśa and his son Bhaṭṭar wrote hymns in praise of Śrī. Pillān's 6000 refers to Śrī akin to Rāmānuja's views and at the same time suggests the intercession of the Goddess. Commenting on the Tiruvāimoli 6-10-10 "without refuge and any other aim after having taken the great Goddess as my mediatrix, I have taken refuge with Her.[41] The Tiruvāimoli speaks much more and simply of surrender (to Her) as the sole refuge and protector. "Oh! you, on whose chest the lady of the Lotus resides with determination never to leave it for one small moment. This slave, he placed himself under your feet totally and has no other refuge" (VI' 10-10).

The lady of the Lotus who always abides on the chest of God[42] is seen as a symbol of God's never-failing grace and it is

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39. Saraṇāgatigadya - Para 1, Sudarśana Sūri.
40. Carman - Page 243. op. cit.
41. Carman - ibid, Page 244.
42. Kaylor - God Far God Near, Page 65

to this grace Nammālvār entrusts himself in his act of surrender.

This we find that Śrī is the fullest consciousness - power of the divine, Puruśottama, in Vaiṣṇava theology. She is both a mother and an agent for our ascent to the Lord, fulfilling it through her inimitable grace and knowledge. In the works of the ācāryas we find invocation to Śrī. The dvaya mantra is interpreted as emphasising Śrī's importance, for the word "Śrīman" precedes the Lord's name. Śrīmat is taken to signify the eternal union of Śrī and the Lord.

The last of the preceptors, Maṇavālamāmuni desires that Śrī participates in the upāya and the southern recension's view is that she is a finite Jiva. This Śrī controversy originated in the series of commentary by Periavāççān Pillai, Nāyanārachar and Vedānta Deśika on Yāmuna's Çatuslōki. If Nāyanār ācār says that Śrī is a finite soul without Īśvara's lordliness and all pervasiveness, Deśika refutes this argument and establishes that Śrī is an inseparable aspect of the Lord Himself, sharing all His qualities.

He reiterates the same view in his Rahasyatrayasāra. He invokes the Vedānta concept of (apṛthik siddhi) and concludes that Śrī must be considered as an aspect of the Lord's own nature, who participates[43] in the upāya as well as in the upeya.

Deśika as a synoptic thinker[44] harmonised the paternal idea of the fatherhood of God and rulership with the maternal instinct of tenderness in the ideas of Nārāyaṇa and Śrī. "Truth, when transfigured by love, mediates between extremes, links thought and action and becomes a unifying power".

Thus we may conclude that whatever the ontological status of Lakṣmī, there is no doubt that Her grace is essential to salvation. As divine mediatrix she intervenes between the jīva and paramātma, transforms the former into a mukta and the latter into a saviour.

The summary of the main results are as follows. Rāmānuja was able to restore the balance between the moral and religious interests of human life by bridging the gulf between philosophy and religion and declared that Lord Viṣṇu with His consort Śrī is the destiny of man and looked at the religious scriptures not

43. Patricia Mumme - The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theological Dispute, op. cit. Page 238.
44. P.N. Srinivasacarya - The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita, Page 531.

from the mutually opposite points of view of philosophy and religion. His theism has the. support of both scripture and tradition. Bhakti and prapatti were evolved in his writings due to the mysticism of the Ālvārs. The leading support given by the Pāñcarātra literature, established the Vaiṣṇava school on firm grounds and the superiority of Viṣṇu and Śrī were fully recognised (accepted). Thus on the comprehensive analysis and understanding of the human experience, he constructed the superstructure of his metaphysics[45] which is God-oriented and integrative, involving infinite addition where the bhakta reaches his or her own self-perfection in and through God's self- enriching substantiality. This forms the base of Rāmānuja's solid work on the practical aspect of Religion namely, the complex organisation of the temples.

VAIṢṆAVISM TO ŚRĪVAIṢṆAVISM

When Rāmānuja became the leader of the Vaiṣṇava Community, Ālvārs' compositions, Upaniṣads, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and works of Ālvār the Nyāya Tattva Yogarahasya were are all in vogue. Bādarayaṇa's brahmasūtras were commented in brief by Dramiḍa. Bodhoāyana wrote a commentary on the Brahma Sūtra. Brahmanandin also known as Ṭanka, commented on the Çāndōgya Upaniṣad. Amongst these works in sanskrit from the period of Nāthamuni, most of them are lost except those of Yāmuna.

The Guruparamparā verily declares that Rāmānuja had access to many of these works, and that Rāmānuja took a special trip to Kashmir, to read through Bodhāyana's commentary on the Brahma Sūtra.

It was long after his period, that the system of philosophy preached came to be known as Viśiṣṭādvaita. Vedānta Deśika (15th Century) declares that Nāthamuni was the earliest exponent of this system. Among the two works of Nāthamuni (6820-830 A.D.) the Nyāya Tattva - which is lost is known from Vedānta Deśika's citations from it as the earliest work on the philosophical aspect of the school. The other work Yoga Rahasya is also lost.

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45. Krishna Sivaraman - Hindu Spiritualism, Vedas Through Vedānta, New York, 1989.

In the Nyāya Tattva as it is available only in the form of citations, are laid down the metaphysical and epistemological aspects of the system representing a revised and better presentation of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika tenets.

Yāmunācārya (916-1041 A.D.) developed the concepts presented in the Nyāya Tattva, and those which he received in the traditional line from his preceptor Śrī Ramamiśra, (Maṇakkāl Nambi). These concepts were emulated very ably by Yāmuna, who made a deep study of the systems of thought prevailing then.

The religious and philosophical atmosphere during Yāmuna's early years was not very conducive to preach the Vaiṣṇava ideals.

The doctrines of the schools of Buddhism, Nyaya and Mimāṁsa were overthrown by Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda and monistic doctrines and the principles of Śaivism were prominent much to the disadvantage of other schools of thought.

The monistic school of Śaṅkara had developed on the three bases of the Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gītā and the Brahma Sūtra. To establish Vaiṣnavism on solid foundations, Yāmuna took in his hands the same bases, and wrote eight works which are as follows:

(1) The Ātmasiddhi, Īśvara Siddhi, Samvit Siddhi, Gitārtha Saṁgraha, Āgamaprāamāṇya, Çatuślōkī, Stotra Ratna, and Mahāpuruṣa Nirṇaya.

Bādarāyaṇa composed the Brahma Sūtras with a view to convey the real nature of the self. The commentary of Dramiḍa received an elaborate exposition at the hands of Śrī Vatsāṅgamiśra, Ṭanka, Brahmadatta, Śaṅkara, Bhāskara and others. Ṭanka also known as Brahmanaṅdin is pointed as an eminent Ācārya by Rāmānuja.

Yāmuna took it upon himself mainly to refute the views of Śaṅkara and Bhāskara. Yāmuna's arguments are based on the teachings of the Upaniṣads. The Siddhitraya consisting of Ātmasiddhi, Īśvara Siddhi and Samvitsiddhi bear ample testimony to the vindictive aspect of his writings.

The contents of the Bhagavad Gītā are treated by him in his Gitartha Samgraha which has 32 slokas. Here he says that the means to the attainment of the ultimate goal of life is devotion which is produced as a result of the performance of scriptural

duties and the emergence of self knowledge.[46] According to him yoga in Gītā means bhakti Yoga.

Prapatti - complete surrender,bhakti, and the place of jñāna and karma in the religio-philosophical aspects of the system are very clearly expounded. The authority of the Pāñcarātra āgama is settled by him in his Āgama Prāmāṇya where establishes the high antiquity and undisputed authority of the Pāncarātra literature, the canon of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas'. Aspects of Bhakti are best revealed in his two lyrics, the Çatuśloki and Stotra Ratna which are at the same time the repositories of the religious aspirations and outpourings of a devotee longing for God's grace.

The Çatusloki is in praise of Śrī the consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa is in four ślokas. It contains the essence of the Vaiṣṇava tenets bout the greatness of Śrī and her relationship with humanity.

The Stotra Ratna is in sixty five ślokas in praise of Viṣṇu. It not only brings the greatness of Viṣṇu, but is filled with deep religious fervour appealing for God's mercy and jīva's dependence on God. All these works contain the quintessence of the Vaiṣṇava doctrines of philosophy.

The fundamental doctrines which were developed by Rāmānuja do not have a clear picture at the hands of Yāmuna and theistic colouring is given by Yāmuna to the practice of karmayoga.[47] The paths of bhakti and prapatti are strongly recommended for adoption. Karma and gnāna are absolutely necessary for practice but are subsidiary to bhakti. Prapatti is dealt with but stress is not laid upon the imperative need to practice as was developed after the days of Rāmānuja. The exposition of the crucial passages of the Upaniṣads are original. It can be safely admitted that Yāmuna's writings had not only impressed Rāmānuja much but also made the latter base his conclusions on the basis of Yāmunacarya's decisive statements.

Yāmuna establishes God's existence as a controller over everybody. Rival theories are refuted by him. In his Samvitsiddhi[48], She takes up two passages from the Çāndōgya Upaniṣad (6.2.1).

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46. *sva dharma jñāna vairāgya sādhya,*
    bhakti eka gocarah,
    nārāyaṇah param brahmah,
    gītā sśātre samudhitah
    -Gītārtha Saṁgraha, verse 1.From S.N. Dasgupta,p.100.
47. Dr. V Vardacarya - Yāmunācārya.
48. ibid

Verses from the Çāndōgya Upaniṣad (6.8.7) are stated to have been interpreted by Śaṅkara as supporting his theory that Brahman alone exists and that the world is unreal. The arguments which Yāmuna advances are originated in conception and executed with just reasoning.[49]

The Gītārtha Saṅgraha is an excellent epitome of the teachings of the Gītā. Here Yāmuna discusses the three paths karma, jñāna and bhakti and concludes, that bhakti is the means; It is also stated as essential even for adopting the path of self surrender prapatti.

By the time Yāmuna became the head of the Vaiṣṇava community, temple worship had attained much celebrity. Yāmuna lived in Śrīrangam, when the great temple of Śrī Ranga was celebrated according to the Pāñcarātra āgama. During this period charges were framed against recognising of the system of Pāñcarātra as valid. The Pāñcarātra priests were then condemned as unworthy of respect as they gained their livelihood by attending to the rituals in temples. A section called Utpātyasambhavat[50] (Brahma Sūtra (2.2.4245) is included in the Brahmasūtras of Bādarayaṇa. On the face of them this section goes against Pāñcarātra validity. Śaṅkara commented upon these arguing against Pāñcarātra validity. This added to the already smouldering fire of antagonism against Pāñcarātra.

The Vaiṣṇava creed had to be safe guarded against this onslaught. Otherwise worship in the temples must have been affected adversely, if not destroyed altogether. Yāmuna took up this matter and vindicated Pāñcarātra's validity in his Āgamprāmaṇya, where he argued for Pāñcarātra mode of worship with reasons scholarly arranged for defence and maintenance of the positions. His refutation of Śaṅkara's attitude to the Pāñcarātra validity is very strong and fruitful.[51]

Incidentally, Yāmuna discusses and declares the validity of the Śaiva āgamas as baseless in as much as Viṣṇu is the supreme deity over and above all other deities. A thorough examination of Viṣṇu's supremacy is discussed.In short here he has justified the orthodoxy of the Pāñcarātra system. In his Çatusloki, he establishes the place of Śrī in Vaiṣṇavism. Her supreme position

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49. ibid.,pp.,16,17,18,19.
50. ibid.,pp.,43-47.
51. Bhāgavata Mahātmya, 2.1.8

is proved. Viṣṇu is said to have two positions, one in which He is formless and the other having a form of ravishing beauty.

These above works of Yāmuna have undoubtedly formed the foundations for the edifice which Rāmānuja raised later. Another source book for the development of Vaiṣṇavism is the Bhagavat Gītā which contains a lucid and categorical exposition of the tenets of Vaiṣṇavism. The absolute entity of the Upaniṣads is Bhagavān,the supreme deity of the Vaiṣṇava religion (Gītā 3.23-24 and 5.29) where Kṛṣṇa refers to himself as the all powerful supreme being. The Lord discusses the need to do karma, take to jñāna and practice bhakti (also 9.28-34 Ch. XI). There is parity in the significance of the purport of this chapter XI with the derivative sense of the word Viṣṇu. How to get into the path of devotion is clearly conveyed in 18.54. karma, jñāna & bhakti have their places in the path of attaining final release 18.55-589 ślokas 18065 and 66 proclaim this word to humanity. Bhakti and prapatti are thus shown as essential to win God's grace and attaining him.

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa is Purāṇa par excellence to bring out the essence of the teachings of the Vedas. It intends primarily to prove Viṣṇu's supremacy over other deities and the second is referred to as Vāsudeva which gets the explanation in 1.2.12.He is everywhere and in all things and hence the scholars declare him as Vāsudeva. The greatness of Śrī is fully treated in 1-9 16-140. The epithet Vāsudeva is justified in 6.5.78-80; 81a 82. His body is treated in 6.5.84 and 85.

Next to this the Bhāgavata Purāṇa plays a very important role in establishing Viṣṇu's supremacy. Non-mention of this by Rāmānuja is taken to indicate, according to modern scholars a later date, posterior to Rāmānuja's date. Most modern scholars date the Bhāgavata Purāṇa in its present form at about the 10th century. Some put it any earlier than the 6th century.

Probably the final form of this Purāṇa is probably the work of some group or community of brāhmaṇas probably living in the Tamil speaking region of south India. So it can be inferred that the legends making the Purāṇa must have long been current in the folk literature. Since some of these legends in written literature as different as the Silappadikāram tradition of the time between second and fifth centuries.

Madhvācārya draws reference to and cites passages from the Purāṇa. Madhva flourished in the 12th century. It is not clear

o admit how a Purāṇa which was not taken note of by Rāmānuja .bout a century before could have become.a popular text. It may ›e possible that this Purāṇa should have existed in some form ›efore the 10th century or even earlier. The Purāṇas are to upplement the Vedic Concepts. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa served this ›urpose in a thorough manner. Rāmānuja must not have referred o this Purāṇa.

Viṣṇu's supremacy is maintained in the Mahābhārata and /iṣṇu Purāṇa yet, the deity Viṣṇu in these forms of descent avatāra) gets a more enchanting splendour while treated by Śuka n the Bhāgavata vide - 10.3-9,11; Vasudeva's description of Kṛṣṇa ,t the time of the letters assuming his true form 10,41, 20, 23 - Ķṛṣṇa as he enters Mathura with Balarāma) Viṣṇu's enchanting orm is not found in the ancient texts except the Purāṇa. The levotional aspect of attachment between Kṛṣṇa and his devotees s best depicted only here. He is dependent upon his devotees 9-4-63). "Neither penance nor Vedic Study knowledge or actions lo bring God to man. Devotion alone does it". the cowherdesses epresent this[6] (Bhāgavata Mahātmya 2.1.8).

I am their heart and they are mine. They do not know anything part from me nor do I anything other than them. Name of God when ıttered knowingly or otherwise destroys the sins of those who utter it 6-2-18).

We cannot be sure of showing that Rāmānuja knew of these lescriptions but the description of the Lord in the ›araṇāgatigadya and in his introduction to his Bhagavat Gītā ›hāṣya is so graphic.

The Lord of Lakṣmī, He who is opposite of everything that s evil and the sole seat of all auspiciousness, who is infinite .nd is solely of the nature of knowledge as bliss who is the vast ›cean of countless auspicious qualities, whose divine form is the reasure house of infinite qualities such as brilliance grace, ›erformance tends softness, beauty and youthfulness which are :verlasting and faultless.[52]

From this Bhāṣya we can say that Rāmānuja had the nfluence of this Purāṇa or Jitante Stotra. Not citing passages rom this Purāṇa is no proof of Rāmānuja's unawareness of the .vailability of this Purāṇa. He has not written any description of he Lord in the form of his own work.

Lastly the compositions of the Ālvārs contain a treatment of God his nature, form, path of devotees and self surrender. Forms of God in His transcendental divine descents, inner controller and idols are treated either singly or together. Devotion and its kinds are treated in Tiruvāimoli 9.4.5., 10.5.21 Mudal Tiruvandādi 39,77. Irandām Tiruvandādi 46. Mūnrām Tiruvandādi 16 and Peria Tirumoli 10.1. The Lord is easily accessible Tiruvāimoli 1.6.7 His qualities ībid 1.8-9, names 2.7. enchanting appearance 3.1. and this supremacy 4.10 are treated by Nammālvār. He takes the form which his devotees desire him to take; prapatti is taken by Nammālvār under Śrīnivasa (6.10)

The above sources were helpful for the growth and development of the philosophical and religious atmosphere when Rāmānuja became the master of the Vaiṣṇava creed. Yāmuna or any other ācārya during that period or earlier to that wrote independent treatises on the Upaniṣads or Brahma Sūtras. The reasons were the following:- Śaṅkara was the earliest philosopher whose works have come down to us. His doctrine was Brahman without attributes is the only reality, everything else being declared as unreal. Bhāskara who came after him in the realm of philosophy held that the world is real but the difference between Brahman and the world is only due to conditions (upādhi) which are physical bodies. Yes, Brahman is the source for all this. His theory is called the Aupadika Bhedā Bheda. Yāmuna took up these doctrines of Śaṅkara, and refuted them in the Samvitsiddhi. Bhāskara's system is not popular like Śaṅkara's. Rāmānuja had at least two tasks to achieve. One is that Brahman is identical with Viṣṇu the latter being the personal God of religion. The other is the declaration that the world is real.

The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.7.2 declares that Brahman is the soul (ātma-Śarīra) while all others including matter and its evolutes and souls are its body. This concept became useful for Rāmānuja's development of the fundamental doctrine of Śarīra - Śarīri bhāva to maintain organic unity. Brahman is the only one with these representing the body.

Many of these concepts like value of devotion and prapatti, Brahman with attributes, reality of the world were extant, but they did not get a systematic exposition and treatment by the ācāryas before Rāmānuja. But Nāthamuni and Yāmuna, the latter in particular paved the way for the development of many concepts at the hands of Rāmānuja. Yāmuna's eagerness to make Rāmānuja

the inheritor of the traditions is too well known. It is related in the Prapannāmṛta that Yāmuna was anxious to meet Rāmānuja but shook his mortal coils off immediately before Rāmānuja came to meet him. So Rāmānuja could only render the last homage to his body.

Śaṅkara who preached advaita said Brahman is the only reality and the world is void. Bādarāyaṇa later held that the relation between the Brahman and the world of sentient and non-sentient beings is one of identity-cum-difference based on a condition (upādhi) which lies in the possession of the physical bodies by the selves due to karma. Yādavaprakāśa held the view of the natural identity cum difference as Śvabhāvika-bheda bheda. It is in this atmosphere Rāmānuja had to learn and preach his philosophy. On one side were the cult of the saivites (from ancient times) claiming Śivas Supremacy, but the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Mahābhārata and the Bhagavad Gītā proclaimed the supremacy of Viṣṇu. Born as a son of parents with Vaiṣṇava leanings, Rāmānuja had no difficulty in implying the tradition of Vaisnavism. Being a thorough student of mīmāṁsa, he could interpret the passages in the Upaniṣads and the Brahma sūtra in favour of Viṣṇu's supremacy. He had to contend with Śaṅkara, Bhāskara and Yādavaprakāśa and expose the weakness in their arguments in establishing the Brahman with attributes and that the world is all real. (through the concept of the body-soul relation). He was able to demonstrate that the Brahman is the only one with the sentient and the non-sentient beings bring the body of God, directed and sustained by Him and existing entirely for His purpose. The ultimate oneness and reality of the absolute is recognised in the inseparable unity of açit, çit and Īśvara.

He compares the relation involved here with that between body and soul his conception of the absolute may be characterised as that of an organic unity in which as in a living organism one part dominates and controls the rest.

The subsidiary parts are known as viśeṣaṇas (attributes) and the predominant one viśeṣa (substantive) since the attributes cannot by themselves exist separately the complex whole (viśiṣṭa) in which they are necessarily included is described as a synthetic unity. Hence the term Viśiṣṭādvaita.[53]

Soul is the nature of consciousness and has attributive knowledge always associated with it. It is not merely a hypothetical unity of individual experiences, but an eternal entity.

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53. Swami Adidevananda - Studies in Rāmānuja.

Its consciousness flows out without any obstacle, comprehending everything though the soul itself apart from its consciousness is viewed as of atomic size, it reaches the kinds of space through its attributive knowledge. It is ānanda and also manifests itself in liberation. Man with his physical body, derived from nature (prakṛti) on the one hand, and God for his inner-self on the other, presents the dual nature and conflicts of human life. The souls are countless in number. With those which are free or in bondage, Viśiṣṭādvaita recognises a third category of perfect souls called nityas who have never been subjected to transmigratory existence. Though each soul is a doer and experiences God as inner ruler (aṅtaryāmin) controls it without interfering with the freedom which is due to it.

The term Īśvara stands for the entire universe with its çit and açit, elements included in it. Thus God becomes both the cause and the effect. In dissolution, He subsists as the cause with the whole universe latent in Him in what is called creating, subtle matter becomes gross and souls expanding their attributive knowledge enter into physical bodies according to their previous karma. Since the causal form includes everything that is required for creation, God becomes the cause of it. He also grows as the cosmos and thus comes to be called Brahman. In the so called change, He does not suffer any change in Himself but only through ways comprehended in the whole of which He is the inspirer. He is not only the absolute but is also the inner ruler.

On the side of religion, He is as completely personal. He enters into personal relations with the soul. He is the God of Love and abode of all unsurpassable attributes. His love for his devotees far exceeds their devotion to him.

TEMPLE ORGANISATION BY RĀMĀNUJA, NAMELY THE FOUR TEMPLES - ŚRĪRANGAM, TIRUPATI, MELKOṬE AND KĀÑÇĪPURAM

ŚRĪRANGAM TEMPLE

We have seen that Mahāpūrṇa initiated Rāmānuja with Pañcasanskāra (on behalf of Ālavandār) with utter humility and began giving instructions to him on Vaiṣṇava doctrines. After taking the ascetic order at Kānçi. Rāmānuja took Mudaliāṇḍān and Kūreśa as his disciples and initiated them into the Vaiṣṇava community. He taught them the Pūrva and Uttaramimamsa. When Yāmuna's disciples heard of the new developments at Kāñçi they sent messengers on behalf of Lord Ranga to Lord Varada, seeking permission for Rāmānuja to leave the services of Varada and join that of Śrīranga. It is said, when Tiruvarangattupperumāl sang a beautiful prayer, Lord Varada was moved and granted the desired boon.

Rāmānuja reached Śrīrangam, was met by Perianaṁbi and was offered the pontifical chair. He entered the vast temple premises, went to the sanctum and chanted Tirupallanḍu and Ālavandar's Stotraratnam. It is said that Sri Ranganatha gave the wealth of both the realms (Ubhaya Vibhūti). Thus Rāmānuja came to be known as Uḍayavar, (possessor of great wealth).

He at once started with the affairs of the temple. First came the treasury, the food storage and the accessories for worship; he looked into the duties of the higher and lower servants of the temple. Akalanganattālvān, a non-brahmin, was appointed as supervisor who looked after the daily and periodic rituals, got repaired the ramparts and the flower gardens.

The Koil Olugu, the temple chronicle, makes it clear that Rāmānuja proceeded slowly in the entire reorganisation of the temple administration. In this process, he had to incur the displeasure of the existing staff, since many functionaries were displaced and their powers were curtailed. Stories go to say that

even an attempt on his life was made by poisoning him and Rāmānuja had to flee to Tiruvellarai. He returned two years later, only after the servants had repented for their action. Another story in Koil Olugu throws light on the conflict behind the transfer of power. The keys were still with the hereditary high priest, Periakoil Naṁbi who opposed Rāmānuja's ten fold divisions as against the five-fold ones of the Parijanas :

Rāmānuja found a way out; he deputed Kūreśa to participate in the funeral of Naṁbi's mother, and on the eleventh day, asked for the hereditary post and the keys of the temple which Naṁbi readily handed over. Thereafter Naṁbi was given the name of Amudanar and was later assigned the function of chanting an āndādi as an appendage known as Rāmānuja Nurrandādi, an ode of reverence on Rāmānuja's qualities, which later became a part of the four thousand.

About the Śrīrangam Temple: The Śrīrangam temple[1] is termed as Periyakoil, the shrine of shrines for the Sri Vaiṣṇavas. It lies on an isle surrounded by the river Kāverī on one side and Kolliḍam on the other. The deity therein is known as Kasturi Ranga or Alagiya Maṇavālan. Old Tamil literature refers to it as Tiruvaraṅgam. The name owes itself to the legend that - once the holy vimāna (Śrīranga Vimāna) of Viṣṇu got stuck at this place. An isle lying in the midst of the winding branches of a river is called arangam in Tamil. Thus the spot came to be known as Śrīrangam in Sanskrit and Tiru-Arangam in Tamil. Lying between two rivers just as the Suśumna nādi lies between the Ida and Pingala nādis of the nervous system, the temple is the Sādhanālaya with the seven prākarasā, denoting the principle of Sathyālaya, the human body or enshrinement of the Lord. Since then it is known as Talai-Arangam.

A Word about the Koil Olugu[2]: It is a record or register and is supposed to be the work of the āçāryas of the past. The work of a single writer, but a record written and maintained by successive wardens of the temple. It is almost like a diary kept up by successive generations. Since, it also contains an exhaustive treatment of Rāmānuja's work, it might have been written immediately after his death. A very interesting detailed description of Uḍayavar's reforms and reorganisation is brought out by the Koil Olugu. Here these divisions are described

elaborately. But for some jumbled sequences here and there which may be due to later interpolations, the Olugu is still a valuable source book on the affairs of the temple. The Guruparaṁparā which traces the history of the religious movement and the work done by the preceptors is based on hagiology. Both the Guruparaṁparas of Pin Palagiya Perumāl Jeer and that of Brahma Tañtra Svatañtra Jeer, the Divyasūri Çaritam and the Prapannāmṛtam of Anantārya speak clearly of the Ācāryas, who were less remote than the Ālvārs.

The Sattvata, Pauṣkara and the Jayākhya are the most important of the Pāñcarātra samhitas. Different Vaiṣṇava temples following Pāñcarātra have chosen different samḥitas, as far as the rituals and mañtras are concerned and they serve as text-books for the priests. The Śrīrangam temple follows the Pārameśvara Samhita[3] of the Pāñcarātra which gives full details of the gateways, prākāras, dvārapāla, the devotees as well as the sanctum. The āgama must have laid down rules in a very early period governing all the details and the builders tried to follow them as far as possible.

If the authority of the Olugu is accepted, the Vaikhānasas were doing worship in Śrīrangam, Rāmānuja was instrumental in appointing Pāñcarātra priests in place of the former who could perform the worship as expounded in the Pārameśvara Samhita. Hari Rao says that whosoever was the author of the Samhita must have had the Śrīrangam temple in mind. The tenth chapter of this samhita deals with Vimāna Devata of the Ranga Vimāna. The temple note arranges the history of the shrine into prehistoric and historical times. The style of Olugu is like that of Maṇipravāla; its authors are anonymous. The initial period is referred to as Kalikālam and the later as Śalivāhana era, which seems to be more accurate. The Alwars have sung vociferously of this Lord and Tirumangai, the last Alwar, has built walls around the temple, raised its height and laid gardens. The Daśāvatāra Sannidhi and the Āli Nāḍan Tiruvīḍhi also boast his name. It was this Alwar who started the ādhyayana festival, (one of chanting the Four thousand). When the prabandha code was drawn up, Nāthamuni followed the footsteps of Tirumañgai recited the Tiruneduntāṇḍagam during the Kārthigai festival and Tiruvāimoli in the ādhyayanotsava in divine melody, illustrating them with gestures. He taught his nephews, Melai and Kilai

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3. Hari Rao - ibid.,p.10.

Agathālvān to sing to tune the prabandhas. After Nāthamuni, the religious code and temple affairs were taken care of by Uyyakkonḍar and Manakkāl Naṁbi. The latter influenced Ālāvandar or Yāmuna, grandson of Nāthamuni to renounce the worldly attachments, hence Yāmuna became an ascetic and took up the office of the Śrīkāryam (superintendent). He had strict control over the temple āgamas, removed the members of the other school and dismissed them from the temple.

After long years of peaceful administration, Yāmuna wanted to take Rāmānuja in his fold. But it was God's will that this could be accomplished only after Yāmuna's demise. Rāmānuja was ordained for the complex pontifical seat of Śrīrangam. We have numerous inscriptions in the temple of the çola kings of this period detailing their gifts and benefactions during and the temple's growth in organisation, wealth and resources since Srirangam was becoming the accredited headquarters of the Vaiṣṇava movement in south India. Rāmānuja took over the administration of the temple, the details of which are given as follows :

UḌAYAVAR TIṬṬAM

The Koil Olugu describes the duties of each of the ten groups of temple servants as fixed by Rāmānuja. From the days of Tirumañgai it was five fold i.e. the Kovaṇavar, Koḍavar, Koḍuveluḍuppār, Pāḍuvār and Tulaiyiduvār. These were expanded into ten groups. In the Śrīrangam temple the priests were hereditary servants who received their lands and assignments from a chieftain on a permanent basis. Their duties were defined and supervised by the Senāpati Durantara, who was all powerful.

When Rāmānuja took over the temple affairs, he appointed Mudaliānḍān as Senāpati Durantara. From his days, the temple, besides being a place of worship, also became the venue of religious and philosophical discourses. Before Rāmānuja's emergence, the Prabandhas were being recited and purāṇas read, which seldom attracted the intellectuals. But the picture changed with the association of many of Rāmānuja's disciples by systematising and elaborating the administrative machinery of the temple; he purified and rendered it more meaningful. Rāmānuja effected a degree of cooperation between the vedic scholars and the temple oriented Śrīvaṣṇavas.

From now on, his endeavours were directed towards the proper and effective administration of the temple and for the perfect attention to the daily worship of Sri Rangan!tha.[4] He was a great Vedāntin and also a selfless religious reformer. But his amazing skill in temple administration is revealed in the changes which he introduced there. His zeal for raising the standard of the common man in the sphere of religion, his anxiety that the procedural details concerning the daily worship for the arça form of God in the temple should not be affected on any account, and his realization that the members of the community should be made to understand their duty in rendering service to God according to their mental and physical equipment, gave him enough strength to build and develop the religious affiliations of the people in and around the temple at Śrīrangam.

It is no exaggeration to say that it could have taken thousand years perhaps for a legislative institution to accomplish through enactment of laws and regulations and proper implementation - whatever Rāmānuja, a single dynamic religious administrator had achieved within his own lifetime. The laws, legislatures enact, are often found to have shortcomings, necessitating frequent amendments from time to time. In the long run, most of these laws continue to be linked with the original only in name, their contents having been changed thoroughly. The administrative rules which Rāmānuja introduced in all the major temples, remained unaltered - except for slight changes they might have undergone in consonance with the shifting cultural affinities of the Vaiṣṇava Community.

For approximately a thousand years, the system has been working well and is being followed in the temple to the full satisfaction of the community. No other temple of Viṣṇu has an administrative system so complex and so meticulously attentive to the procedural details of the method of worship as has been in vogue there. The credit for it goes entirely to Rāmānuja.

The following are in brief the main features of temple administration , introduced by Rāmānuja. Kurattālvān (Śrīvatsāngamiśra) was appointed to keep control over the religious codes. Mudali Āṇḍān (Dāsarathi) was given charge of the inner organisation. Akalankanāṭṭālvān, probably a çola Chieftain who became Rāmānuja's disciple, was entrusted with

4. Hari Rao - ibid.,p.56.

the work of managing the temple lands. The servants, who were till then in five groups, were classified into ten groups with specific duties assigned to each group. the Vaikhānasa system of worship, which was being practised during that period, was replaced by the Pāñcarātra system of worship. Those who were exercising their authority in the temple were asked to use the seals of Garuḍa, Śaṁkha and Çakra as marks of authorisation.

The adhyayanotsava, for the celebration of which objections were raised in some quarters, was arranged on a sound basis and the objections were ruled out. The images of Nammālvār and other saints were installed. Arrangements were also made to have the Divyaprabandha recited on all the twenty days of this festival, according to the code drawn up by Nāthamuni. For a permanent and regular supply of milk for the Lord, a gośala was started and his disciple Garuḍavāhanapaṇḍita was put in its charge.

Rāmānuja appointed Ālvan as his trusted assistant in controlling the religious code and his wife Āṇḍāl, control of the inner organization. From the Umikkaṭṭu (where the husk was stored) Rāmānuja himself controlled and supervised the temple affairs, according to the Pārameśvara Samhita. Toḍavattittuimaraiyār (a high brahmin) and Koḍuveleḍuppār were entrusted with the lock and key. The Talayiḍuvar, with the Garuḍa seal; Āryabhaṭṭal kept watch and Pallavan Villuparaiyan was in charge of the accounts. But Rāmānuja kept the signet of discus with himself and the conch with the Naṁbis.

The learned Periakoil Naṁbi was brought under his fold and was named Amudan. Rāmānuja laid down the duties of the temple parijanas as given below :

1) The Tiruppatiyar - were pilgrims of the different sacred shrines. But all of them accepted Rāmānuja as their guru. They ranged from Tiruppārkādal Dasas and Tirukkurugaippirān and Chelvanaṁbi. Their services in the temple were allocated accordingly.

2) The Tiruppaṇisaivar were the five descendants of Koḍavar, Tiruttālvarai Dāsar, Nālukavipperiāmāl Dasar, Ṣaṭhakopa Dāsar, Tirukkalikkani Dāsar and Rāmānuja Dāsar. Their names indicate their respective gurus

3) Bhāgavata Nambis - a new group.

4) The Ullūrār or the todavattimār were the arçakas attending on the Peria Perumāl and Tiruvaranga

Māligaiyar bore the supplemental procession image. These were taken as Śiṣhyas and following duties were assigned to them.

5) Viṇṇappam Seivār - The temple singers of whom Nāthamuni Arayar became Rāmānuja's disciple.

6) Tirukkaragam Kaiyār - The holy water pot carriers, Tiruvaranga Vallalār and Tuyamunivelam were assigned the work of bathing the deity.

7) The Sthānattār - The Brahmarāyars, a class of Tulaiyiḍuvār, were given certain fixed assignments in the temple.

8) The Pattukkottu - Consisting of Peria Naṁbi, the Tiruppaṇiseivār, Ālvan, Govinda Perumal Āççān, Amudanar, Pillān and Ciriyālvān to recite the Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma, Atharva Vedas and the purāṇas, Śrīranga Mahātmya, Prabandha, Pūrvottara Mīmāmsa, Āśvalāyana Sūtra and Sri Bhāṣya in the sanctum.

9) The Aryabhaṭṭāl - To keep a watch in the temple.

10) The Dāsa Nambis - To which class Tonḍaraḍippoḍi Alvar belonged.

Thus the ten groups were assigned their duties. As the Senāpatidurantara of the class of Kōvanavar Uḍayavar was the chief of th. Sri Vaiṣṇavas of Śrīrangam. The amalgamation of the permanent services of Garuḍavāhana Paṇḍita and the Tiruppatiyar enjoyed the first place; Koḍavar, the second place; the third was assigned to Bhāgvata Naṁbis.

Rāmānuja assigned some duties to four Ekāngis (outsiders). Eight Vaiṣṇava ascetics were to carry the insignia of gold rods, two silver rods and two rods of cane. Certain permanent duties were assigned to the Śattāda Mudalis.[5] Thus the benediction Rāmānuja divyārya, vardhatām abhivardatām was established in the real sense. The reforms he effected in the Adhyayana utsava is dealt with in a separate chapter.[6]

According to Koil Olugu, the ten groups of temple servants fixed by Rāmānuja are known as Udayavar Tiṭṭam - (arrangement).

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5. Non-brahmins and outsiders,who did not wear the Mupuri.
6. Hari Rao - Koil Olugu,p.50-53.

In the days of Tirumañgai Alwar, there existed five groups - Kovaṇavar, Koḍavar, Koḍuveleḍuppār, Pāḍuvār and Talaiḍuvar. The Kovaṇavars were the ascetics or the āçāryas who were associated with the temple. Koḍavars were pot-bearers, Koḍuveleduppār the torch bearers. Pāḍuvārs singers and Talaiḍuvār were in charge of providing plantain leaves.

The functions of the ten groups or the Pattukkottu are as follows. The superintendent of the temple was Senāpatidurantara. He was also known as Sri Kāryam, exercising overall control on the brāhmin and Śūdra servants, he could even punish them. After taking a bath and circumambulating the flag staff from the Aṇiarangan courtyard and paying obeisance to the Lord, while coming round the Kulaśekharan enclosure, he would inspect the kitchen, the provisions and eatables, assign the head cook and the Ekāñgis their duties. Near the strong room, he would join the Toḍavattirumaraiyār, listening to their recitation. He will also distribute the pūjā dravyas to the arcaka.

Then he would make a visit to the garden, from there to the shrine of Senai Mudaliār and then to the Tirumanṭapa of the Lord. He would meet the men of the ten groups, Śāttāda Mudalis, Ekāngis and śūdra parijanas. He would personally inspect the pūjā. Even in the afternoon, he would stay in the temple to offer milk and Kaṣāya, a medicinal decoction. Going through the Aryabhaṭṭāl door, he would beg forgiveness for any omission. His ḍuties were even more manifold during festival times. For the services rendered, he was given high honour with prasāda and parivaṭṭa (Silk cloth tied round the head).

He was assisted by Perumulturai Adhikāri or the superintendent of the inner organisation, in charge of the supply of dishes and prasāda. Another person was head of the store house, to look after the provisions for the kitchen, festival umbrellas, fireworks, flower garden and also to guard against thefts. Yet another man was kept for repairs and reconstruction. He was also to check on the parasitic growth on the walls and gopuras and to erect pandals and watersheds. The superintendent of temple lands was in charge of agricultural operations, dispatch of grains and arrangement of labourers for service during festivals. They were assisted by one or two Ekāñgies. The first holder of this office was Mudaliyāndān and subsequently, for the next two hundred years the members of his family. When they left Śrīrangam due to the Muslim onslaught, this office was held by many others like Śrīranganārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭar, Uttamanambi and

Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Iyengār. The first one, an ascetic of the thirteenth century, founded a math and gained control over the temple administration. Bhaṭṭar, son of Ālvān, was in charge of the Rāmānuja Darśana. During the Vijayanagara rule, the office of Senāpatidurantara was divided between the families of Āṇdān and Bhaṭṭar. The descendent of Bhaṭṭar, the Jīyar (Śrīranga Nārāyaṇa) and Uttamanaṁbi were all patronised by the Vijayanagara Rāya, who honoured them with royal gifts.

Pattukkottu[7] - The brāhmin groups of temple servants.

1) The Tiruppatiyārs were outsiders, who became the disciples of Rāmānuja and settled down to look after temple duties, assisting the arcakas in maintaining light arrangements in the street. Their major work was in the Tirukkartigai festival, preparing thousands of wicks from the kitchen. They were to announce the arrival of cooked offering, cleaning the altar, heaping the rice over the cloth called pāvāḍai and holding torches during festivals. According to the Olugu, they took milk and decoction in procession every night from the Dhanvantri shrine to the shrine of the Lord. This place is referred to as Ārogyaśāla. The duties were hereditary.

2) The Tiruppani Seivar - or the Koḍavar. Their main function was to inspect the street while the deity was in procession. They accompanied the row of Sri Vaiṣṇava hymnists. At the close of each festival, they recited the Tiruppaṇi Mālai or Padippu and so were known as Tiruppaṇi śeivār. These people sacrificed their lives in the boundary disputes with the saivas of Jambukeśvaram.

3) The Bhāgavata Naṁbis installed the flag during the dhvajārohana, to offer the mace of office to Śrīkāryam, read the epistle to Nammālvār on the eve of the Tiruvāimoli festival. Rāmānuja raised their status by giving them some more functions in the sanctum.

4) The Toḍavattitirumaraiyār or Uillūrār - There were both pure brāhmins and also natives of the town, they were the original Śrīvaiṣṇavas, their duties were mainly with the sanctum. They kept the sanctum clean and offered divine food, restored the jewels to the Śrībhaṇḍārās, carried the ṣaṭhakopam behind the processions,

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7. Hari Rao - ibid.,Koil Olugu.

performed puja on behalf of the Senāpatidurantara. According to the Olugu, after the Muslim invasion they gave their duties to the Bhāgavata Nambis.

5) Viṇṇappam Śeivār - consisted of the arayar - the musicians and the choristers. In the Mukhamanṭapa they played the Vīṇa in the early morning and recited verses from the Prabandhas, dramatised different sequences during Tirumoli and Tiruvāimoli festivals and Tiruppāvai during early mornings in the month of Mārgali. To carry important dialogues between the Lord and his Consort on important occasions-like the Praṇayakalaha in Panguni Uttiram. They trace their descent from the nephews of Nāthamuni.

6) The Tirukaragakkaiyār - had their duties to fetch water from the Kāveri in silver pots, on elephant back and fill the vessels of the sanctum and help in the holy Tirumañjanam the decoration of the images. But in later years their duty was to make garlands with tulasi leaves, which work was transferred to Dāsanambis and a few śūdras after the Mulsim invasion.

7) The Sthānattār or Talaiyiḍuvār - were the bearers of processional images seated on vāhanas bearing the long pole to which were tied the Palanquin or Çakra. After the Muslim invasion., even this was shifted to the śūdra servants who kept the privilege of directing the procession.

8) The Bhaṭṭal- Recited only the Sanskrit pieces like the Itihāsas, the Śrīranga Mahātmayam and Āśvalāyana Sūtra, Bodhāyana Sūtra, Ālavandār Stotram, Sri Bhāṣyam, Gītā Bhāṣyam, Gadyatrayam etc. This service was done by Peria Koil Nambi before the coming of Rāmānuja. Kurattālāvān, followed Rāmānuja who in turn distributed this right to his disciples. After the Three-thousand was recited, the Bhaṭṭar would wash the hands with pure water and receive the prasāda.[8]

Garuḍavāna Paṇḍita would lead with the Ṛg Veda; Peria Nambi with Yajur and Sāma Veda, Tiruppaṇi Śeivār with the Atharvaveda. The Bhāgvata Nambis and Kūrattālvān

8. Hari Rao - ibid.,Koil Olugu.

the Purāṇas.[9] The other scholars as Amudanār, Embār, Aççan, Pillān and Çiriālvār along with their co-reciters would one by one recite the itihāsas and Puruṣa Sūktam during the Tirumañjanam, at the end of which they would be honoured,like the arayar, with Tīrtham etc. In due course of time, the Koil became Tengalai in spirit and Vedic recitation was discontinued.

9) The Āryabhaṭṭal - were the watchmen and guards of the temple.[10]

A certain chief by name Ganḍadeśa came to Śrīrangam and gifted a huge treasure to the Lord who was not pleased to accept it. Some brāhmaṇas were appointed from the north to guard it. They won over the heart of the Lord and got the honour of the temple watch. This has actually no authority except that inscriptional evidence shows that pilgrims came from the north in the medieval period and made gifts. The mention of Āryabhaṭṭal is dated the 30th year of the reign of Kulōttunga I and according to the Olugu, which registers a sale of land by the temple authorities to one Rāja Rāja Brahmarāyan of Anisthānam in Kashmir Deśam.[11] By eighth century the Śrīrangam shrine had become popular according to Tirumañgai and attracted devotees from all sides. These people kept watch from the southern and northern gateways of the third enclosure opened the gates in the early morning for the holy water. The Olugu says that there was arulappādu when the Lord was taken in procession through the third gateway.

10) The Dāsa Nambis - provided flowers and garlands made of Kilimālai, Kilichendu, Tanḍaimālai, Kottumālai and Kuḍamālai, decorated the palanquin with flowers, held torches in the divine presence in front of the sanctum - sanctorum and the Senai Mudaliār in the procession during festivals.

Apart from these, were the Vēttirappaṇis or mace-holders (orderlies) who kept watch in the Tīrtha Manṭapas, admitted the Vaiṣṇavas according to their qualifications made triumphal shouts by clapping hands, maintained silence in the crowd during

9. Hari Rao - ibid.,pp 84,85.
10. Hari Rao - ibid.,p.245.
11. Hari Rao - ibid.,Koil Olugu.

Tiruvandikkāppu and beginning of recitals. The Ékangis were to draw the curtain during food offerings to the deity, keeping watch at the door way, during the pūjā and procession. They were naturally brahmaçāris.[12]

The ten śūdra groups of temple servants were -

1) Vellālas appointed to measure the grain in the granary with the marakkāl and supply the required quantity for daily use. They even guarded the gateway of the Rāja Mahendran enclosure. A Vellāla was also Vilupparaiyan - accountant. According to the chronicle, Rāmānuja wanted the brāhmins to take charge of the accounts, but local influence persuaded him to do otherwise and he called them Sthalasaṁprati. They were known as Pallavan Villupparaiyan, who wrote epistles to the Alvar, wrote documents of the Senāpati and carved inscriptions on stone. Vasantagopadāsan - who wrote lease and mortgage deeds, made copies of the Senāpati's orders and stone inscriptions. Both had equal jurisdictions with regard to the accounts of the store-house, and also the day book.
2) The Śaluvas had miscellaneous functions like Ilanīr kainkaryam or offering water of tender coconuts, adorning the house vehicles during Brahmotsavam and fanning the deity, blowing the conch, offering clay for sealing the locks of the door-ways. They used to climb up the Kārtigai Sthaṁbha.
3) Emberumānaḍiyar - The Devadāsis (brides of God) were the dancers attached to the temple. Their duties were to dance and sport in front of the decorated elephant, carrying the holy water. The different dances were named Malaippu, Kelikkai, Utamaḍal, Ammanāṭṭam etc. In the festive processions, they enacted appropriate episodes during the Vasantotsava, viz. Rāsakrīda on Śrījayanti. At the ritual of bherītāḍanam they danced during Brahmotsavam. They performed Malaippu from behind the arayar and made their offerings even during the early morning Viśvarūpa. It is said that they even captivated the Muslim generals when they were in occupation and thus were able to save the temple from destruction. For

12. Now, the term applies to northern brāhmin servants, with duties outside the temple-Koil Olugu, p.91.

this reason, when any of them died, their mortal remains were cremated with fire brought from the temple kitchen.

4) Tiruvelakkārar - were the watch-and-ward to guard the store house, the room containing the canopies, drums and umbrellas and the vāhanaśāla; brought provisions from adjoining villages and deposited them in the granary and waited alongwith the parijanas, when the procession was taken out.

5) The Kammālas - were the sculptors, masons and metal workers. The first was silpakavi, who attended to masonry repairs of Gopuram, Kalaśa and Vimāna, carved out stone images and painted figures on the walls of the manṭapas. The goldsmith mended the ornaments, attended to the duties connected with Jyeṣṭhābhisekam and provided the vāhanas with golden plates. The copper smith and the bell metal worker made vessels, stands, bells and gong and also coverings for the steps, stairs and pedestals. There were skilled professionals for casting metal images also.

6) The needle workers, carpenters, silk weavers were in charge of making blankets and clothes for the deity adorned with pearls. They also decorated the ceiling and canopy. Some made umbrellas, huge fans, badges of honour and palanquin cloth, and decorated the dhvajasthambha. The others made silk threads and tassels for the decoration of the vāhanas.

7) The Potter - In Śrīrangam, prasāda is made in fresh earthenware every day. Potters made a daily supply of vessels for preparing prasāda, pāligai vessels for germination of seeds during Ankurārpaṇam and also the Ahal lamps during Kārtigai.

8) The Boatman - Śrīrangam is an island skirted by two rivers, when the rivers were in floods, then boatmen brought milk and provisions from adjacent villages to the temple, and also served as rowers during the Teppotsavam, (float festival) and supplied cane, coconut, palmyra leaves, stems, mats etc. from the villages on the river banks.

9) The musicians - were instrumentalists and drummers. Even Naṭṭuvanārs - dance masters were members of this group. The former played to the tune of the arayar during Paḍiyeṭram and during dances. They played the five Tālams, Mattalam, Suttalam, Çelli Mattalam, Vāgai and Āvijam[13].

'HE CHIEF AND HIS DEPUTIES

The following are the details of the administrative duties of enāpati Durantara, the chief of all the groups of servants ppointed by Uḍayavar and a 'Kovaṇavar' belonging to the group f Tiruppatiyar.

Every dawn he would proceed to the temple and station imself on the verandah of the Periya-tirumanṭapa where the ead of the store-house would meet him and render him beisance. He would then be told of his day's work. then the ervants connected with the various inner duties would come nd render obeisance to him. Then he would bathe himself and roceed to the foot of the flag-staff in the Aṇiyaraṅgan courtyard nd make his obeisance to it. While coming round along the ulaśekharan enclosure he would inspect the kitchen and look nto the containers of the usual provisions and the cakes and urries and other eatables appropriate to the occasion and assign he head cook and the ekāṅgīs to their respective duties.

Then he would inspect the condiments store and inquire ntó the stock or condition of ghee and such other liquid stuff nd assign the ekaṅgīs there to their appropriate duties. At the ;ateway of the 'Nālaigaivaṭṭil', he would receive the obeisance f 'Koil-kātta Perumāl' near the strong room adjoining the torehouse. In the Rājamahendran enclosure, he would join the Toḍavattituimaraiyār' at the time of the prabandha recitations.

From the box of perfumery, he would direct his servant, an kāṅgī, to take sandal-paste, sandal, camphor, musk from ashmir, collyrium, kastūri and tiruman, medicated camphor, tc. and hand them over to those brāhmins (for pūjā purposes). Ie would also direct the ekangis to carry to the Nāççiyār shrine t the proper times sealed parcels of robes, vestments and erfumery.

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3. Koil Olugu,pp.99,100.

Then entering the flower garden, he would inspect the purple water lily, the champak, the jasmine, the white lotus and other varieties of flowers agreeable to the divine frame and after assigning them to their respective duties, he would proceed to offer worship at the feet of Senaimudaliār. With His permission, he would enter the Alagiamanavālan tirumanṭapa and worship Jaya and Vijaya. After this, he would meet the Śrīvaiṣṇava parivāras of the ten groups, the ekāṅgīs, Śāttādamudalis and the 'Vettirapaṇis' and the ten groups of the Śūdra parijanas and ask them to do their respective duties with vigilance. Then entering the sanctum he would arrange for commencing the pūjā.

After the celebration of the festivities and the ending with the noon-meal of the Perumāl, he would worship God with many offerings and then retire to his house and take food.

Again from the Verandah, he would well direct the remaining festivities of the day up to the offering of milk and rice ('Kaṣāya') and milk to the perumal in the night. Then he would receive the honour due to him, by the side of the shrine of Senaimudaliār. Leaving it, he would reach the verandah and calling for all the judicial officers (dharmādhikārīs) from both the river banks, he would inquire into the daily transactions. Thus, after looking into the temple administration he would return home with his wife, begging, at the Āryabhaṭṭāl gateway, to be excused for sins of commission and omission.

During the festivities, beginning with the departure of the Perumāl for procession from the gateway of the sanctum and ending with His ascending the Çerapaṇḍyan throne, on special festival days his duties were to see that all the various services were efficiently done under the supervision of the respective heads of groups, to offer work allocation to all the parijanas excepting the nambis and the Āryabhaṭṭāls and to punish or reward the parijanas as may be necessary. He was also to seal with the signet of the discus (the locks of) the box of the jewels of God, the storehouse, etc. The storekeeper, the superintendent of the inner organisation of the temple, the in-charge of the store of miscellaneous articles, the supervisor of repairs and reconstructions, the ekāṅgīs, the accountant in-charge of the temple lands and the justices attached to the temple (dharmādhikārīs) who were all Kovaṇavars, represented Senāpatidurantara - the administrative chief - in various capacities.

The following are the details of the honours that are done to Senāpatidurantara by the Perumāl : After the Perumāl was offered amudu (meal) on the decorated seat the Tiruppatiyar would offer him, in the divine presence, prasāda out of which he would take only the myrobalan (āmalaka). Betel would then be offered to him. Daily and on special occasions, after Senaimudaliār and the Perumāl had been offered their noon-meals, the Naṁbi, who performed the pūjā received tirtham from the Sundarapāṇdyan (bowl). After washing his hands, he would offer the pariçārakas - the Toḍavattituimarayar - who belonged to the group of Ullurār - tīrtham from the ' Uttaraṇi' (spoon) once. They, on their part, would drink it and wash their hands. When the mangalārati (burning of camphor before the deity) was over, the Naṁbi would gather the tīrtham in a cup, smell it and taking a spoonful out of it, call for Śrīkaryadurantara in the name of the Perumāl.

The Senāpati would then come uttering 'My Lord' , 'My Lord'. The Toḍavattituimaraiyār would offer him tīrtham thrice and then the parivaṭṭam would be tied round his head. The sandal paste, garlands and betel would be offered to him, the Śaṭhakopam placed on his head and finally, the parivaṭṭam untied. After the noon-meal of the Perumal and Senaimudaliār, the parijanas of the Nāççiyār shrine would take the remnants of the prasāda and other eatables to the house of Senāpatidurantara (to serve as his food).

At the close of every utsava, he would worship the Perumāl from the shrine of Senaimudaliar with all honours due to him. While starting out for procession, the Perumāl with the blowing of the 'ekkālam', would proceed to the gateway of the shrine of Senaimudaliār, where He would stop facing Seneśar. Then Senāpati Durantara would stand to His right at the end of the pole of the palanquin and offer worship facing west.

Those who form the row of hymnists, would then wash the feet of the Perumāl and collect the tīrtham in the Sundarapāṇḍyan and offer it to the Senāpati, when the parivaṭṭam would be tied round his head. The Toḍavattituimaraiyār would then collect the flowers that had decked the idol and offer them to him. The Naṁbis, on receiving the various types of garlands from the Śāttādamudalis and sanctifying them by sprinkling water over them would lay them at the feet of the Perumāl for a moment and then offer them to Senaimudaliār.

The garlands that had previously adorned Senaimudaliār would then be brought before the Senāpati and offered to him. The betel from the God's spittoon, after His meal, would then be offered to him. The Toḍavattituimaraiyār would receive pure water from the holy water pot of the Tirukkāragakkaiyār in a cup and offer it to Senāpatidurantara for washing his hands. The Naṁbis would then take the mace from the God and offer it to him. The Toḍavattituimaraiyār would place the Ṣaṭhakopam on his head and shoulders. The Naṁbis would then take back the mace and replace it as of old, after which the Talaiyiduvār would untie the parivaṭṭam. The Perumāl would then turn to the south, the 'ekkālam' would stop, and the Toḍavattituimaraiyār would in the name of the Perumāl, offer arulappāḍu to the devotees saying, "Oye, the followers of Rāmānuja !" then tīrtham and Ṣaṭhakopam would be offered to all the Jeers, the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, the ekāṇgīs, the Śāttādamudalis and others.

Before the days of Uḍayavar, these classes of people were addressed merely as "Śrīvaiṣṇavas". Since the Rāmānujamuḍayār, the Bhaṭṭas and the śāttādamudalis lived beyond the gateway of the Rājamahendran enclosure, the honours at the doorway of the shrine of Senaimudaliār during the Tiruvāimoli-tirunāl were done only to Senāpatidurantara. When the recitation of the Vedas was completed in the Kulaśekharan enclosure, sandal paste and Ṣaṭhakopam would be offered to him in the name of his services.

After arulappāḍu, rolls of betel leaves, etc. were to be offered to the Lord. On the occasion of special festivals, he would inquire into the attention due to the God in the tirumanṭapas and thus his services would be spread over the temple.

The following were the duties of the head of the storehouse:

Everyday at dawn, he should send to the kitchen, after a three-fold inspection, certain measures of cleaned rice, (with the paddy grains and the broken and ill-cleaned pieces carefully removed), and also varieties of dal, wheat, gram and other cereals, after a similar inspection. Everyday with the help of the Tiruvelakkārar he should have the ten kinds of vegetables, coconuts, fruits etc., brought to the store house and thence taken to the kitchen.

Different kinds of paddy, tamarind and other juicy substances, and vegetables that are daily received from the temple lands would be sent to the 'Iraiyāyiraṁkoṇḍān' or to the oil room, where they also send to the kitchen the requisites for preparing

the cakes and other eatables for the God. When the Perumāl was taken out for the procession, he would employ a thousand coolies to carry the umbrellas and the Tiruvelakkārar to carry the pennons. In the night, he would organise, with their help, a display of fireworks for which they would be paid in kind. He should have the paddy pound into rice. He should feed and protect the elephant, the horses, the cows, the pigeons (in the holes provided for them), the deer, the wild cows, the peacocks and the parrots belonging to the temple. It is also his duty to supervise the milking of the cows in the presence of the head of the cow-shed and hand over the milk to Talaiyiḍuvān.

The following were the duties of the supervisor of repairs and reconstruction to the temple :

The daily removal of parasitic plants from the walls and the gopurās, the conduct of repairs and reconstruction, the display of tapestries and hangings during the daily and the special festivals and the erection and decoration of pandals and watersheds in front of the Tirumanṭapas.

The following are the duties of the keeper of the miscellaneous stores :

He should look after the flower gardens in the east and the west of the sacred shrine of Tiruvarañgam and protect and tend the fragrant flowers that are suited to the divine frame like the redwaṯer-lily, 'Kastūri', the oleander ('Arali'), the jasmine, the mullai, the champak, the white lotus, etc. in their proper seasons and make them available when required. He should also collect the greens and vegetables, sugar-canes and such other juicy stuff, and send them on (to the kitchen). Another duty of his was to prevent injustice and evil-doings in the storehouse and to reward or punish as the case may be.

The following were the duties of the superintendent of the temple lands :

Sowing seeds in the temple lands in the proper seasons; supplying the storehouse - varieties of grains, juicy stuff, the revenue from leases (incomes from 'movaḍai' and 'maravaḍai') and the requisites for condiments like fruits, coconuts, ginger, turmeric, etc., sending rice, dal, etc., for offering prasāda to the God on the 'pāvādai' in the manṭapa on festive occasions, and providing for the temple fruits, tender coconuts, sugar-cane etc. from the villages.

The following are the duties of the supervisor of the cow-shed at Solanganallūr :

He should feed the cows properly, everyday. milk them at dawn and hand over the milk to the man in the milk-room through the cow-herd.

Two ekāṅgīs represented the store-keeper. A third ekāṇgī, stationed at the gateway of the sanctum, assisted the superintendent of the inner organisation. A fourth, who was a Vedic student, was assistant to the superintendent of the temple lands. As these four ekāṇgīs were ascetics and detached persons, they were allowed considerable freedom. In the same way Mudaliyāṇḍān of the first group, Senāpatidurantara and the chief of chiefs, represented Senaimudaliār.

This state of affairs was in vogue for a long time. Since the Perumāḷ, with great delight, bestowed upon Rāmānuja the mace and the name of the 'Possessor and bestower of eternal bliss', Uḍayavar with perfect independence exercised his office in all prosperity, increased the number of groups of services from five to ten, and appointed Mudaliyāṇḍān as the director of these ten groups of parijanas.

THE TIRUPPATIYĀR

The following were the duties of the group of the Tiruppatiyar :

When the cane door of the gateway of the sanctum over the Kulaśekharan step was opened before dawn, they would enter the temple after bath and sweep and clean the gateway, the brass doorway, the enclosure of Dharmavarma, which is also the procession path, where the Todavattituimaraiyār dwell (and do their work), and the Amudumanṭapa. In all the four directions and in the various shrines, they would examine the lamps and change the wicks in the 'mangalārati' plates, 'kuttuvilakku' (standing oil lamp) in the sanctum and the lamps in the Alagiyamaṇavālan -tirumanṭapa. For these and other lamps, they would fetch ghee from the store-house through the ekāṇgi 'Sonbhanḍāri' (the bhandari of the golden treasury). They would place the wick on the 'Kumbhālatti' (pot shaped lamp), light it and give it to the arçakas during pūjā.

For the 'mangālarati' accompanying the procession of pongal, milk-rice, noon and night meals for the Lord, they would fetch flour from the storehouse and making suitable wick-holders

out of the dough, place wicks in them, light them and hand them out to the arçakas. On the arrival of the taligai (cooked food), they would screen the sanctum and heap the boiled rice over the pāvāḍai and hold torches during the divine meal. they would also bear torches whenever the arcaka proceeds to perform 'homa' or sacrifice. Their chief would hold the mace and inquire into the temple affairs.

Announcing of the arrival of the amudu, reciting hymns when the idol is being bathed, and singing the 'kokkavi, and the tattikkavi' are also their duties. They would offer worship with incense whenever the Perumāl is seated in the manṭapa outside the sanctum. They would prepare wicks for the early morning pūjā on the Tiruppāvittiratirunāl. For the Tirukkārtikai festival, they would prepare a thousand large wicks. For the daily and periodical pujas they would change the wicks in the Rāmānujan lamp, light it and offer it for worship.

On the evening of the day of the Tirukkārtikai festival, they would fetch lighted lamps from the kitchen for worship. They would prepare amudu and take it in plates to the sanctum. After 'nivedanam' or rice-offering, they would inspect the Amudumantapa and clean it with cloth. In the evening they would fetch ghee and with it light the lamps in all the doorways in the three enclosures within the Āryabhaṭṭāl gateway and in the sanctum. They would light the lamps in the tirumanṭapas when the Perumāl starts out for procession, and when He returns they would hold two torches in front of Him, crossed like a pair of scissors, within the gateway of the sanctum. During the Tirukkārtikai and the Śrījayanti festivals they would distribute parched grains among the devotees. For the daily and special pūjās they would bring the sacrificial fuel and the darbha grass and make 'pavittiras' out of the latter.

They would do the small services connected with the 'bali' offerings on festive occasions. (Every night) they would take in procession medicinal decoction and milk to Garuḍavāhana Paṇdita, from the 'Arogyasalai' (for being offered to the Perumāl). When the Perumāl was taken in procession to the Alagiamaṇavālan - tirumanṭapa for receiving the 'bali' offerings during the daily festivals, they would carry the hand lamps along with the procession and place standing lamps in the tirumanṭapas. These are the duties of the Tirupati Śrīvaiṣṇavas.

THE TIRUPPAṆI-SEIVĀR

The following were the duties of the group of the Tiruppaṇi-sāivār :

Sweeping the Rājamahendran enclosure, the Çandana manṭapa etc. and sprinkling water therein; inspecting the streets whenever the Perumāl started out for procession; reciting the Tiruppaṇi-mālai at the close of each festival; the sprinkling of water whenever the umbrella is held out for the Perumāl in the afternoon of some special festival days and when He is taken out for procession; and splashing water, scented with camphor etc., and placed in two large vessels in front of the Perumāl, high into the air, after the Koḍavar had been honoured with arulappāḍu this continued till betel was offered to Him, so that the wind carried the scent to the divine frame.

While fixing the temple services, Emberumānar had appointed the Śrīvaiṣṇavas to recite the Iyarpa while they formed the Tiruvōlakkam in the name of arayar, and the Tiruppaṇi-seivar, who went by the names of the Ālvārs and his five gurus, to accompany the row representing the shrine. In this connection their duties were : carrying the 'Sāṁyachhatra' in front of the row of hymnists; making way for the procession, receiving on behalf of the shrine-betel, fruits, coconuts or money that may be offered by devotees giving the coins thus received to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas when they disperse; collecting the fruits and coconuts together when offered in abundance, and offering tīrtham, prasāda, betel, fruits and coconuts to the hymnists when they go to the various shrines for reciting the prabandhas; collecting people together under the 'Sāṁyachhatra' in order to arrive at a decision in cases of disputes regarding the religious code or any temple affair; and the distribution of prasāda first to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas and then to the Jīyars in the math or in private houses (on ceremonial occasions).

After the images of the Ālvārs, Āṇḍāl and other deities were set up in the Akalangan and Ālināḍan enclosures and those of Nammālvār, Tirumangaimannan and Maḍurakavi, in the Sundarapāṇḍyan Tulāpuruṣamanṭapa the Tiruppaṇisaivar would offer the 'Ālvār-tiruvaḍinilai', known as Madhurakavi, and tīrtham to those Śrīvaiṣṇavas, who had finished the recital of the Prabandhas during the festivals of the Perumāl, in the shrine of Nammālvār, (the head of the Ālvārs). Though the name of th 'Alvārtiruvaḍinilai' is generally 'Rāmānujan', in this shrine, it i

known by the name of 'Madhurakavi', as named by Emberumānār, when he installed the Tiruvaḍinilai and the image of Nammālvār from Tirunagari to Śrīrangam. That name has been in vogue ever since.

Since the succession of the Tiruppaṇi-seivār on the boundary line during the Brahmotsava of the year Nala, after Śaka 1297, they were given the honours of arulappāḍu .in the name of 'Velendinānperumāl Dāsar', followed by many gifts and the elephant ride (of the Perumāl) celebrated on their behalf, in the same place.

In course of time, the Śrīvaiṣṇava reciters began to suspect the Tiruppaṇi-seivār needlessly and directly received the money offered by the devotees, while they sang in chorus in the procession. As a consequence, the Tiruppaṇi-seivār ceased receiving and distributing of the coconuts and fruits offered in large quantities by the Śrīvaiṣṇavas. After this, there was a new kind of distribution of prasāda and eatables among the hymnists without reference to the Tiruppaṇi-seivār.

The details of the honours due to these were : Uḍayavar had laid down the procedure of the distribution of tīrtham, parivaṭṭam, garlands, sandal paste and Ṣaṭhakopom by the Tiruppaṇi-seivar during the Tiruvāimoli festival, (when their duties were required) and of issuing arulappadu for the recitation of the Tiruppaṇimālai composed by himself. After sometime the Tiruppāṇi-seivar were honoured, on the boundary line with arulappāḍu, tīrtham, sandal paste, parivaṭṭam, garlands and the elephant-ride of the Perumāl in their name.

In the year Akṣaya, after the Muhammadan occupation, the Rāya had come down to the sacred shrine of Tiruvarangam. While worshipping the Perumāl in a street during a certain festival, he spate out chewed betel. The Tiruppani-saivar removed it and threw it away. the Rāya, on seeing this, asked them how they could (condescend to) do so, to which they replied it was their duty. The Rāya talked to them pleasingly. The duties devolving on the Tiruppaṇi-seivar were seating the idol for a procession; installing the flag on the flag-staff; offering the mace to the Srikāryam at the foot of the flag-staff; offering amudu to the Alvars in the presence of the Perumāl on special occasions; ascending the 'dīpāsāhambha' or the great lamp-stand during the Kartikai festival and offering 'diparadhana' or lamp-worship to God; reading the epistle to Nammālvār; making known the will

of God regarding the offering of arulappāḍu to the Ullūrār and Stānattār; and receiving their share of the prasada when their duties were over - these are as laid down in the Pāñcarātra.

Under the orders of Udayavar they had also the charge of the signet of the conch and other duties like reciting slokas in praise of the God's vehicle in the divine presence before the beating of the drum; adorning Senaimudaliār with the fresh garlands offered to Him by the Perumal when the latter starts out for procession; giving away His used garlands to the administrative chief; conducting the pūja, nivedanam, etc. of the various minor deities within the third enclosure; reciting a passage from the Vedas when they were called upon by the Perumal to do so; initiation of pupils into the secrets of the Pārameswara Samhita by the aged and the wise amongst them. They would offer betel and nut to the deity during pūja and during the ceremonial bath of the idol, the articles required for such a bath, viz., loin-cloth, etc.. Then they would offer tirtham and prasada. When the Perumal started out for procession the arulappadu would be issued in the gateway of the sanctum.

The following were the duties of the group of the Vinnappamsaivar:

Playing on the Vīna at dawn, after bath, in the Alagiyamanavālan tirumantapa; reciting the sacred names of God when honoured with arulappādu, at the commencement of the pūja; reciting a verse from the 'Muvāyiram', in the holy presence, before they leave at the close of the pūja; reciting likewise during the noon and night pūjas; singing in the Aniyarangan courtyard and reciting the appropriate verses for the Paḍiyeṭram in the Rajamahendran enclosure during the daily festivals of the (Tiruvaranaga) Çelvanār; playing on the Vina in the south-western corner of the Rajamahendran enclosure; singing melodiously when the idol was being bathed, when taken in procession and during festivals; reciting the Mūvayiram and enacting the noble deeds (of God) and illustrating them with gestures during the Tirumoli and Tiruvāimoli festivals, (after being honoured with the arulappādu addressed to them by their titles and the presents of silk and cotton parivaṭṭams with hangings etc., that are usually offered to the Ālwars); reciting the 'Tirupalli-eluççi' and the 'Tiruppāvai' to tune, every day at dawn, at the commencement of pūja, (throughout the thirty days of the month of Mārgali); closing the recitations of the 'Tiruppāvai' and recommencing the usual (daily) verses at the close of the Margali pūja (after being

honoured with arulappādu through their titles and presents of silk and cotton parivaṭṭams): singing the swing-song during the swing-festival and the festivals of Śrirāmanavami and Srijayanti (after being honoured with arulappadu and other presents); acting as the representatives of the Alvar, and reconciling the God and the Goddess by means of a dialogue (when arulappāḍu for reconciliation is issued) at the time of the ceremony of the 'Lovers Quarrel' (Pranaya kalaham).

The following are the duties of the Tirukkaragakkaiyar: Taking the water-pots from the strong room adjoining the storehouse at dawn and bringing those pots filled with water (from the Kaveri river in state) on the back of an elephant, enough for the day and the next, and making stock of it in their room; filling up the pañçāpatras with the sacred water for all pūjas beginning with that at dawn; offering a pot of water during the ceremony of washing the teeth of the idol; offering water for washing the mouth of the idol whenever pānakam and betel are offered to God; preparing such pānakams for the daily festivities in the temple and the special festivities in the tirumanṭāpas; offering water, without fail, from the water-pot for washing the mouth and feet of the idol in the course of the procession; preparing and offering the basil garland to the Perumāl while He is starting out for procession (and ordinary garlands at other times); making a chain of basil beads and offering it to God for His bath; making and offering to the deity ornamental garlands of red-water lilies, etc.; offering garland to the Senāpatiyār when the procession starts, and Vellai and Vāgaççāl to the deity in the sanctum - these are the duties executed by them, as laid down by Uḍayavar.

The following were the duties of the Stānāttar or Talaiduvar :

The duties connected with the Ṭōlukkiniyān, Ṭiruççīr and Samarabhūpālan bearing the Lord riding in His palanquin or His mounts excepting the elephant; holding the umbrella for the holy water, amudu, etc., while in procession; holding the huge circular umbrella (for Tiruvaranga) Çelvar and the umbrella for all vehicles except the Tölukkiniyan. (Holding the umbrella for the god, from the back of the elephant; offering to the deity milk, milk-paste, curd, etc., and distributing them after nivedanam, and depositing the rest in Śrībhandara; offering ghee for taligais of amudu and eatables of god; stationing themselves at the head of the poles of the palanquin in order to secure evenness of motion; tying parivaṭṭam round the head of the Senapati

Durantara offering him garlands; issuing arulappādus to the arayar the Ālvārs and announcing the Ţiruvandikkāpu, the puja and the Vedic recitations in the tirumantapas; offering betel to arayar; distributing prasadā and sandal paste in the tirumantapās; taking the 'Tirumugapattaiyam' to the Ālvar; affixing the Garuḍa seal to the (box of) jewels, etc.

The following were the duties of the Bhaṭṭal group :

Subsequent to the pūja and the recitation of a verse from the Mūvāyiram by Arayar and when arulappādu had been announced by the Ullūrār, they would wash their hands with the pure water brought by the Ţirukkaragakkaiyar in a huge cup. Then they would respectfully receive the prasāda from the hands of Tirukkaragakkaiyar and recite the following one by one. Garuḍavāhana Paṇḍita would lead with the Ṛgveda, Periya Nambi would recite the Yajur and the Sama Vedas, the Tiruppani-saivar the Atharva Veda, the Bhāgavata Nambis and Kurattalvān the purāṇās, Tiruvarangattamudanar, Govinda Perumal, Aççan, Pillan and others from various sacred shrines along-with their co- preceptors would one by one recite the Itihāsas, Sriranga Mahatmyam, Āsvalāyana sūtra, Āpastamba sūtra, Bodhayana sūtra, the Mimamsa Sūtra, Vyākarana, Nalāyira Prabandham, Ālavandārstotram, the Śribhaṣyam, the Gita Bhasyam, the Gadyatraya and the Pançankām.

First the Vedas, in order of Suklayajus and Sama, then in order, the puranas, the Itihasas, Sriranga Mahatmyam, the Stotras, etc., were recited by the appropriate persons. In the tirumantapas, they would recite in the same order, after the Stānattar had issued arulappādu. During the ornamental bath of the idol, they would recite the Puruṣasukta after arulapaddu and after receiving tirtham from the plates brought by the pariçārakas. During the Tiruadhyayanotsava, they would begin to recite these with the exception of the Nālāyira Prabandham, daily in the presence of both the God and the Goddess, at the close of the midday worship, and would finish with the Purānās, when the Perumāl started out for procession. Then they would be offered tirtham, silk and cotton parivattams, sandal paste, a single garland, betel, prasada and Sri Satakopam in the sanctum.

Then the Perumāl would appoint the Kovanavar to leave them in their house, taking them in the Brahmaratas alongwith all the parijanas. Accordingly, they would be taken to their homes.

This is an ancient custom. Before Udayavar divided the temple servants into so many groups, these services were done by Periya Kōil Nambi as the high priest. Then Udayavar separated these and assigned the recitations of the Ṛg Veda, the Sāma Veda, the Atharva Veda, Sukla Yajus, Ekayana Sākhā, Mimamsa sūtra, Viṣṇu purana, Bodhayana sūtra, the Asvalayana sūtra, Vyakarana sūtra, the Itihasa and the Alavandar Stotra to those Mudalis, along with their co-students, who had attached themselves to him as his pupils. After some time, when the Śribhāṣyam was written, this and two others - the Gita Bhasyam and the Gadyatrayam were included.

The reading of the Pançānkam and the Kaisika Purāṇa and the Brahmarata honours adjunct to it were done in the name of Ālvan only to signify the fact of his having received the office of the high priest as a gift from Periya Kōil Nambi. The other duties were assigned to others. Thus the duties of Periya Kōil Nambi, who was managing the temple priesthood, remaining (all the while) as an outside pilgrim and without attaching himself to any group, were divided among many men, who, since they were not already members of any group, were formed into a separate group, viz., the Bhaṭṭāl-kottu and this is still in vogue.

From the time of Parāsara-Bhattar's succession to the pontifical seat of Udayavar, the closing ceremony of these recitations was held in the Kulottunga Çolan tirumantapa in the Kulasekhāran enclosure (inhabited by Bhattar), in the presence of the Perumal. After the altercation at the temple of Panriyālvan, the Upaniṣads were being recited, without any break, at the boundary (between Srirangam and Jambukesvaram). Such are their duties, which carry with them various presents and honours. Tirtham, sandal paste and undissolved sandal are offered to these reciters by the Stānattar at the commencement of the recitation of the Vedas during the Tiruvāimoli-tirunal, in the presence of the God and the Goddess and at the closing of those recitals, in the Kulottunga Çolan Tirumantapa. When the arulapāddu for the recital of the Kaisika Purāṇa was announced they came holding that book in their hands.

The following were the duties of the Āryabhattal:

Keeping watch at the southern and northern gateways of the third enclosure ever since Tiruvarangesanar opened His sacred mouth and assigned their duty; maintaining carefully, with torches in their hands, the incomings and outgoings of articles

throughout day and night in the first two enclosures and outside the gateway of the sanctum, with the store-house excepted; guarding the Tōlukkiniyan placed outside the tirumantapas after the Perumal was taken in; holding the rear end of the pole of the palanquin when He was taken in procession during the Adhyayanōtsava and at other times until He was taken back to the sanctum; sleeping during the night in the verandah by the side of the Āryabhatta and Rajamahendran gateways - four in all - and after the decoction and milk had been offered to the Perumal; and opening the doorways at dawn on the coming of the Tirukkaragakkaiyār to do their duties.

When they were thus performing their duties, they entertained a needless suspicion that their watch should not go without being assigned to a separate seal. A few days later, after Udayavar had left Srirangam for the west (Mysore country) and subsequent to the demise of Krimikanta Çhola, his son Kulottunga çola came to the Srirangam temple along with the çera and the Pāndya, on hearing the anarchy that was prevailing there. At that time the Āryabhattal, closing their doorway, asked these three kings to endow for them their three seals. Those three agreed to this and summoning the Āryabhattal handed over to them a royal seal containing their emblems.

According to the saying, "We three have engraved (here) the mark of the fish, the bow and the tiger", they gave Āryabhattal a ring containing the seal with a fish, a bow and a tiger engraved upon it. From that time, the Āryabhattal are having this seal as the protecting amulet of their watch. Udayavar returned and honoured the son of Krimikanta çola with discipleship at the feet of Mudaliyāndān, obtaining (on behalf of the Srivaisnavas) the temple as gift, which fact was made to be inscribed on stone and continued as before to manage the temple affairs. Udayavar and Āndan, on hearing about this seal accepted it, as it was considered protective to the temple and as the emblems of the three kings were engraved upon it, though there was no occasion for a royal 'mudra' in the temple. From that time they recognised the four seals (existing in the temple).

The following were the duties of the group of Dāsanambis :

The Pundarikas of olden days, with great devotion to Viṣṇu, were doing sacred services connected with flowers in Ţiruvellarai and other places. Later they came to the shrine of Tiruvarangam where they laid many flower gardens and continued to do such

services. The duties of these were; laying out flower gardens for the God; holding torches in the presence of God within and without the gateway of the sanctum; bearing the Senaimudaliār and the Ten Murtis in procession during festivals; holding a huge torch, the 'dasari pandam'; decorating the palanquin with flowers in the shape of a chariot; preparing the palanquin for the procession along the seven enclosures; and making varieties of garlands and bunches of vāgaççāl, kilimālai, kiliççendu, tandaimālai, kottumālai, kudamālai etc. for the purpose. For these duties they would be offered tirtham, prasāda, parivattam, and a single garland. They rendered such services also in the shrines of the Ālvars and Udayavar. In course of time they were shown greater honours.

The following were the duties of the Ekāngis :

One ekāngi would open the gateway of the sanctum and draw off the screen in front of the amudu mantapa on the arrival of the sacred water and when the elephant, the horse, the cow and the devadasis were waiting at the Alagiyamanavālan tirumantapa, and then would draw back the screen. The duties of another ekangi was to watch during puja with one door closed; the drawing off of the screen after nivedanam and helping the devotees according to their qualifications to worship the deity and, at the same time, receiving their offerings; keeping watch during puja, etc. and letting in none but the temple servants answering the call of the two Stanattars for Srivaisnavas twice, when the Perumal is taken into the tirumantapas; refusing to allow anybody to pass beyond the screen; and acting as the guard of the deity in the tirumantapas in the night. Still another ekāngi would on the one hand provide from the condiments depot provisions like cardamom, frankincense, ghee, jaggery, etc. and perfumes like sandal paste, camphor, kum-kum, etc. for general and special festivities, and on the other, deposit such incoming materials safely into the depot.

The following were the duties of the Sattādamudalis :

Decorating the tirumantapas with flowers during festivals and the Alagiyamanavālan tirumantapa daily; making garlands and offering them at the starting of the procession; arranging flowers (on special occasions); proceeding in two rows holding two folded clothes, eight gold and twenty silver torches and waving two pieces of cloth; arranging for the starting of the procession of the Ālvārs; forming a rear batch, with hands folded,

behind the row of hymnists reciting the last two lines of each stanza; bearing the Rāmānuja sword and acting as the bodyguard of the Jiyars and Srivaisnavas.

The following are the duties of Vettirapanis or mace-holders :

Keeping order with the aid of two gold rods, two silver rods and two canes (bent at the top) during the start of the procession in the sanctum and when the Satakopam is taken to accompany it; keeping watch on the two sides of the screen after the Perumal had been taken into the tirumantapas, the Alagiamanavālan tirumantapa, dispersing any gathering inside the sanctum, when the inner screen is drawn on the arrival of the taligai; making way for the Sri Satakopam when it is taken to the row of hymnists after the distribution of prasāda; going before (the procession) and giving warning (to the people); and letting in the Srivaisnavās, according to their qualifications, to receive the prasāda after distribution to those who are entitled to receive them prior by right or by arulappādu. When the Perumal ascended the palanquin, the Stānattar would call for these mace-holders, to which they would respond saying 'Ayya', and 'We are ready', twice. Their other duties are : keeping watch and preventing anybody, including the arçakas, from going in (the sanctum) till the huge garland is offered to the god; making triumphal shouts accompanied by clapping of hands when the procession starts; shouting 'Silence' on the special occasions of the Tiruvandikkāppu and the beginning of the prabandha recitations; reciting panegyrics during Tiruvāimoli-tirunāl; and making way for the row of hymnists attached to the Perumal.

To sum up[14], the following were the brahmin groups; the first group is called the Kōvanavar, the second the Tiruppanisaivar, the third the Kōdavar, the fourth the Bhāgavata Nambis, the fifth the Ullūrār, the sixth the Talaiyiduvar, the seventh the Tirukkaragakkaiyar, the eighth the Vinnapam-saivar, the ninth the Aryabhattal, the tenth the Dāsanambis, and the eleventh the Vettirapanis. These eleven groups alongwith the

14. There is no epigraphical confirmation of Rāmānuja's activities in Srirangam and about the Srivaisnava devotees connected with the temple,but Kulottunga is mentioned.At least five groups given by Koil Olugu are mentioned in this inscription.It was an organised institution,aided by groups of servants and elected committees and protected by kings in times of trouble.

3hattal had all their respective duties. The Bhattal had no place n these groups.

The following were the duties of the first among the Sudra non-brahmin or Sāttada Vaisnava) groups, i.e., the Vellālas; the luty of the Kalālappan (one who measures with the marakkal) vas to measure (grains) in the store-house and measure out the iecessary grains required for daily use in the temple. The duty of the Kōil-kātta-Perumāl (the guard) is to guard the gateway of he Rājamahendran enclosure. The duty of the Vilupparaiyan (the iccountant) is to maintain accounts. These are the Vellāla servants imong the Sudras.

In a particular period, a lord known as Pallavan gave his iame to the Villuparaiyan (as prefix) with a view to making iimself renowned in the temple. From that time the accountant s known as Pallavan Vilupparaiyan. When Iariçaranālayappirayan of his line was maintaining accounts, here arose a confusion due to the invasion of the King of Orissa. As a result, the Perumāl left Srirangam for a safer place, and ome servants who remained in the temple, appropriated to hemselves the income from the temple lands. When these were arrying on the temple affairs, he (the accountant) too joined hem and proved treacherous to the divine cause. Udayavar, luring his pontificate wanted to entrust that duty to a brahmin out all the Stānattārs requested him to let the Vellāla remain, as of old. Accordingly, the temple accountant Vilupparaiyan was established in his office. Kiranur Kilavan was made the 'Stala Samprati' and was given the name of Vansatagōpadasan.

Thus he established two offices. Of these, the duties of Pallavan Vilupparaiyan were writing epistles to the Ālvar, writing lown documents of the Senapati and carving inscriptions on tones. The duties of Vansatagōpadasan were writing the lease leeds and mortgage deeds and taking copies of the documents of the Senapati and the stone inscriptions. Both had equal urisdictions with regard to the accounts of the storehouse and he temple lands including the day-book. It was laid down by Udayavar that the honours of the vagaççāl, the parivattam and he 'elephant ride' were to be done for the service of writing epistles to the Ālvār.

As the Pandya gave his name to Vansatagōpadasan, he is being known as Pāndyan Devappiriyan. After some time the office of Pallavan Vilupparaiyan was merged in the Sribhandāra (i.e.

became extinct), he having left no issue to inherit it. All the honours done for the epistles to the Ālvar are, with the consent of the Stalattar, being done to Vansatagopadasan alias Pandyan Devappiriyan, who wrote down the lease-deed connected with the village of Alagiyamanāvalan on the day of Cittirai-tirunāl inaugurated by Viruppana Udayar.

Sometime after these events, when Uttamanambi became powerful, an accountant belonging to a town on the northern bank was brought and established. His duties were to maintain the accounts of the storehouse, write down the epistles of the God and read them in His presence. When the Jiyar, who was at that time away from the temple, returned he fixed the 'Tiruvālikkal' (stone with the discus engraved upon it) in the house of that accountant, withdrew his house and drove him away as being unfit to enter the temple.

This was accepted as long as the Jīyar continued in his pontificate. Afterwards the accountant that had been dismissed was brought back and given the name of Alagiyamanavālapirriyan, and was assigned the accounts of the storehouse. In course of time he got the insignia of his office - the cap and appropriate dress - and was entrusted with the reading only of the divine letters and obtained a written bond to that effect. Under such circumstances Vansatagōpadasan alias Pāndyan Devappiriyan refused to receive arulappādu after Alagiyamanavālappiriyan. Accordingly, Satagopadasan came to be offered arulappadu first. (Hence) it has been customary to inscribe the name of Stalasamprati Vansatagopadasan first and then that of the local accountant of the village of northern bank, viz., Alagiyamanavalappiriyan. (This was because) Vansatakopadasan interrupted and hindered the inscribers while inscribing. When Bhattar, Jiyar and Uttamanambi, among the Acārya purusas, were powerful, the accountant was called Śrivaişnavappiriyan. Later on, as a result of royal pressure,, the accountant was asked to maintain the entire accounts of the inner organisation of the temple and was assigned the cap and appropriate dress - the insignia of his office - and was also honoured as was the previous Vellāla Vilupparaiyan, with arulappādu first. He also came to enjoy a hereditary title, after Kuranarayana Jiyar, in his arulappadu.

Later on, when Kūranarayana Jiyar came to be known as Sriranganarayana Jiyar, the name of this accountant was inscribed along with the other accountants who continued in the place of

the Vellāla Vilupparaiyan. Thence forwards the (former) accountant came to be known as Sriranganārayanapiriyan. The accounts of the treasury were being maintained by a brahmin in the name of the descendants of both the lines, with the consent of the temple authorities. Afterwards, a Vellala known as Ariya Nainar was in charge of them. In his line many sins and treacherous acts were committed and without his consent the office was annexed to the Sribhandāra. From that time the accounts of both are being maintained by a single person.

While the Vellāla Koil-katta-Perumāl was keeping watch over the gateway of the Naligāivattil, he proved false to the divine cause. Pandyan, the representative (or agent) of the four functions of the Vellalas, viz., measuring grains, Periya Pillai, Pandya Pillai (their duties) and the watch of the gateway of the Nāligaivattil, appointed a descendant of Vasantagōpadāsan - the temple accountant - to the watch of the Naligaivattil gateway as equivalent to Kōil-kātta-Perumāl. Thus when, in his place, the watch was being carried on, Uttamanambi played false by saying that guarding of gold should by custom belong only to the treasury, as if it were the just thing to be done. Accordingly, it was appropriated by the Sribhandāra.

The following were the duties of the Kaikkōlamudali known as Saruvattavan (the piper) of the Saluvar of the second group :

Making a hole, after tearing off the fibre, in the tender coconut and offering it to the deity; keeping watch over the gateways of the Ālinadan and Akalangan enclosures; drawing off the screen when the Perumal left the company of His consort; holding the canopy; holding the pedestal on which the idol is bathed carefully setting up the circular platform for bathing the idol; cleaning and adorning the horse-vehicle of the Perumal; keeping the 'ankusa' and offering it to Him when He starts out for procession, and fanning Him with çamaras from both sides of the horse; blowing the conch and the trumpets; examining and preparing curry powders; tidying the gateways of the Ālinadan and Akalangan enclosures; lighting lamps with oil fetched from the storehouse; bringing plantain leaves from the garden and offering them to make various kinds of parcels of prasada; offering clay for sealing the locks of doors; offering plates of incense (for the Tiruvandikkāppu) on behalf of the Emberumānadiyar, when their services are assigned to the supervision of the Kōvanavar; and calling for their services.

After sometime, they came to possess the duty of offering the huge circular fan (Tiruvālavattam) and the tiruvencāmara to the Devadāsis for use in doing their temple duties, and taking them back. Once Udayavar was dissatisfied with his 'ilanir kainkaryam' and with the desire to appoint a brahmin in his place, he called him and asked him which tree contained the good tender coconut (agreeable to the Perumāl), to which he replied that the sacred mouth and nose of the Perumal only knew it. Udayavar was pleased with him and willingly appointed him in that service.

Even this service failed on one occasion, when the flag was being hoisted on the flag-staff for the dhwajārōhana ceremony.

Since the duty of screening was taken up by a mudali (a Śrivaiṣnava), he had obtained the duties of getting up the flag-staff and the lamp-post (to light them) during the Kartikai festival; and taking the box of jewels behind the arçakas whenever the Perumal bathed outside, and entrusting them back in the store-house-these duties were bestowed upon Kaikkōla Mudali by the arçakās. From that time they have been honoured with parivattam offered to the God on the occasion of the Kartikai diparadhana. They also did the duties connected with the lamp-post in the place of the arçakās during the above ceremony and go behind the box of jewels, as guard.

Having thus divided the temple services among the ten groups, he also assigned certain duties to four Ekāīngis (bachelor servants), who were outsiders. Eight Vaisnava ascetics to carry the insignia of four gold rods, two silver rods and two rods of cane.

For a certain Adhyayanōtsava it was found impossible to fetch the image of Nammālvār from Tirunagari to Srirangam. So Rāmānuja installed the image of Nammālvār in the temple and also of the Acāryas and the Ālvārs excepting Tirumangai. The first Ālvārs were given their honourable place in Alagia Manavālan Tirumantapa opposite the sanctum.

During the Ankūrārpanam, Srivaisnava devotees recited in the streets in a row of one antādi, a centum of the Iyarpā.

Rāmānuja assigned certain duties to tiruppani-saivar to carry the umbrella in front of the row of hymnists. The Ālvārs except Andal, were bathed before daybreak and taken to the sanctum on their birthdays. After worship and naivedyam taken by the Lord and Senai Mudaliār, prasada was offered to the Ālvār and

later taken to Sribhandārs for sale. Ālvārs were offered the pitāmbara, garlands and sandal paste and other such honours. They were then taken to the Devi's temple (Nachiar). Finally, the procession came out on the streets with the recital of the Divya Prabandha.

The same procedure was followed except in the case of Āndāl, who received the prasada (Amudu) straight from the sanctum itself.[1] Rāmānuja arranged for other paraphernalia for Andal as in the shrines of the Ālvārs. The Arayar recited the hymns in the presence of the Lord. Since the time of Nāthamuni Iyarpa was recited by the Arayar. But during Rāmānuja's time Alvān joined the Bhattāl-kottu and assumed the office of the high priest who read the Kaisika Purana Brahmarathā honour was also done in the name of Ālvan. Amudanār was given the privilege of reciting the Iyarpa. Srivaisnavās were co-reciters with the Arayar. While the Srivaisnāvās representing the Ālvārs appointed the Tirupani- saivar to represent the shrine, while the row of hymnists was proceeding some servants were also entrusted with the duty of distributing prasada.

Soon after this, Amudanār composed out a Nūrrandadi - a centum in the Kali metre on Rāmānuja, which in the later years was known as 'Prapanna Gayatri".

Thus did Rāmānuja fix the various offices of temple servants and their respective duties, installed the Ālvārs, made arrangements for all kinds of festivals according to the Pāñcarātra, attended to the repairs and renovations of the temple buildings.

For the daily pūja and other ceremonies he got built a gosāla in the north-eastern corner of the Māda Maligai Tiruvidhi and stationed some cows there and the rest in the region of the Solanganallūr on the northern bank, where five villages were cleared for the same purpose. Since he could not personally go there everyday, he had an image of Lord Ranganatha installed in the place to which Vaikhānasa priests did the worship.

When the Çolā decline began and the Pandyas rose to power, this eventful period, was the Srirangam temple becoming the headquarters of the Vaisnava movement under the great Acāryas, the first of which was Rāmānuja. He was both the Vaisnava pontiff and the warden of the temple. Though there are numerous inscriptions detailing the Çolā gifts, they do not throw much light on Rāmānuja's activities for which the Guruparamparā is the only

traditional source. During his period, the temple grew in organisation, wealth and resources.

The Anbil plates of Pārantaka or Sundara Çolā[15] (956-973) record a grant of land to a brahmin minister, Aniruddha of Premagraha - Anbil, who was a great devotee of Ranga (Lord). Nāthamuni is referred to as Sri Natha. There seems to be an interval of 200 years, between the last Ālvār and the first acārya. The Koil Olugu indicates that the Lord listened to the Prabandhams during Tirumangai's days, but in the days which followed, the holy hymns of the Ālvārs fell into obscurity. Religious classes and discourses ceased. What should have been the reason we do not know. Obviously between the eighth and the tenth century there was no political disturbance to have affected the peaceful religious pursuits.

The inscription found on walls refer to donations by persons for specified purpose. Though they are indirect references they give valuable information on Rāmānuja's administration in the temple. One such inscription of Kulōttunga I (of the eighteenth year of his reign) records the provision of 6 1/2 Kasu made by Arayan Garudavāhanan, alias Kalingarāyar for offerings on three nights when the text of Tettarundiral by kulasekhara was recited. This is the only clear evidence (according to Hari Rao) with regard to the administration of Rāmānuja.

Sri Vāisnava Variyar - a committee of Sri Vaisnavas (2)Sri Vaisnava Vāriyar - members of the committee of the treasury.

This epigraph also gives an account of assembly, a mahāsabhā of Tiruvarangam. The grant also provides for the supply of cereals, ghee etc. for one hundred cakes to be offered to the Lord during the recital of Tettarundiral. The names of Garudavāhanan, of Tiruvaludivalanādu are preserved by the literary tradition and are associated with Rāmānuja and his disciples.

1225 A.D. - Another inscription of Māravarman Sundara Pandya I in the ninth year of his reign shows the importance of the administrative history, including the ten groups of temple servants and the Śri Vaiṣnava devotees of Rāmānuja, who took part in the deliberations to the Sri' Bhandāra or the temple treasury. The king ordered a choice of temple officials by lot and by election too.

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15. K.A.Nilakantha Sastri - The Cholas.

From inscriptional evidence we come to know that the Pāndyas and the Rāyas of Vijayanagara interfered and regulated the administrative affairs. Members of village councils were elected by lot and committees were formed for specific purposes. But the Koil Olugu does not record such committees.

In due course of time, the authority of the Kōvanavar collapsed. But it was entrusted to a body of ten, composed of two from the Kōvanavar, two from Sriranga Maraiyar, one from Ullūrar, one from Vāsal Arayar, two from Arattamukki[16] Anakkur officers of the king. In due course of time Senāpati Durantara's post lost its importance.

In the Vijayanagara period, the royal control became tighter. These kings wrested the temple from the Muslims and made large endowments, in cash and landed property but did not allow their officers to associate directly with the temple.

Hari Rao refers to one undated record in the Srirangam temple (14th century) which gives an account of a council of twenty-three members - ten selected from out of the ten groups of temple servants one from the sanyāsins, five representing the Çera-çolā-Pandya kings with the rise of the new men, who were mere house-holders, not men of learning. There was a lot of interference in the administration of the temple. But during the time of the Nawab of Arcot, it was total non-interference and so the hereditary principle became re-established. The offices of the old system collapsed for ever.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

There was no levy collected from worshippers. All income was derived from free gifts of land gold and various other articles. These gifts were detailed and registered in inscriptions on the walls and pillars of the temple. The temple was a large landowner and had a big representation in the Sabha. Any grant was often placed under the probation of the Śri Vaişnavas.

The items of expenditure were the daily performance of pujas - celebrations which were covered by donations. The temple servants were not paid salaries but were given only food offerings. Priests and Acāryas received gifts of land and house sites. The gifts to the temple by the kings ranged from gold dishes, Kalasa (Gold lampstand) or vase inlaid with precious

16. Word in Periatirumadal of Tirumangai - 3.4.10 - To mean petty chieftains.

stones, pearl garments (Muttangi) crown, Karna Patra and Padakkam. The kings performed Tulābhara, or Tulāpurasa, weighed themselves against gold and gifted them away for gold plates to cover the vimāna and dhwajasthambha. But there was no proper guard for protecting the granary or the valuables against an attack by enemies, because that was least expected. The Āryabhattāl were intended to prevent only petty thefts. So during the Muslim invasion, the temple lost all its substantial property in the first quarter of the fourteenth century.

TIRUMALA (TIRUPATI) TEMPLE

In ancient Tamil Literature, the sacred shrine of Tirumala is referred to as Vengaḍam or Vaḍa Vengadam (northern hill). Tolkāppiam refers to it as Vaḍa Vengaḍam. There were Tamil-speaking peoples in this area. The Sangam literature and Śilappadikāram identify the Tirumala deity as Viṣṇu.

The sacred Four-thousand also sing about this grand shrine. Particular mention must be made of the ālvārs, including Āṇḍāl and especially Nammālvār who in his Tiruviruttam apostrophises some of the flower gardens as being of the country of Tiruppati[17] also ten stanzas in his Tiruvāimoli for Tirumalai, making an explicit reference to this great shrine.[18]

Therefore, ever since the alvārs times, a continuous tradition about the existence of a shrine known as Tiruvengaḍam, dedicated to Viṣṇu, has come down to us. Epigraphical evidence dating back to the eighth century as well as the literary references support this tradition.

The worship in Tirumala temple is done strictly according to the Vaikhānasa āgama, though with some small deviations necessitated by circumstances. The hill was quite inaccessible to the devotees. Therefore, a Tiruvilan Kōil to house the proxy of the Hill deity was built in the Tiruççānūr temple about 826 A.D.[19] and was consecrated for the benefit of the devotees. Another statue was also installed in Tiruççānūr by 870 A.D.[20]

17. Tiruviruttam - Stanzas 3610 and 3639.
18. Tiruvāimoli - III decad,verse nos.: 2326 to 2336.
19. Dr. Ramesan - The Tirumala temple,the Tiruchuganur temple inscription nos.: 218,219,220,223,229,232,233,234,p.235.
20. Dr. Ramesan - ibid,p.113.

Later, to avoid certain sectarian factions, the then leader of the Vaiṣṇava community thought it safe to transfer the worship of the Lord to His place up the hill. This must have happened, according to traditional account, in 960 A.D. during the life time of Ālavandār and his grandson, Tirumalai Naṁbi (Maternal Uncle of Rāmānuja).

Sri Rāmānuja's association with Tirumala seems to have been very intimate. Tirumalai Naṁbi was a kainkaryapara at Tirumalai from whom Rāmānuja inherited the kainkarya bhava and learnt the esoteric meaning of the Rāmāyaṇa.

Later, when Rāmānuja went on a dikvijaya, after Ahobilam, he revisited Tirumalai as the acknowledged leader of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas; he was given temple honours, in the space where the Ḍova Bhaṣyakar sannidhi in Govindarājapuram stands and also at Mokalla parvatam.

According to traditional history, when the śaivites claimed the shrine to be of Lord Śiva, Rāmānuja established it as one of Viṣṇu. There was a long drawn controversy whether the Lord was Viṣṇu or Śiva. In support of the śaivite school the following reasons were forwarded :

i) The Lord's crown is richly adorned with locks of hair, or jaṭājūṭa.

2) Arms have armlets (Nāgabhūṣaṇa) as those of Śiva.

3) The pūjā is done with bilva leaves which are used only in the arçana of Śiva.

4) The Lord is in the centre of the sanctum-sanctorum. Therefore, it is a Śiva idol.

5) As against all these -

   a) It is established as incorrect that the makuṭa resembles that of Śiva.

   b) The main characteristics of the Dhruva Bera are as follows -

1) Śrī Devi on the right breast seated on the Śrivatsa.

2) The scars on the shoulders.

3) Free and easy posture of the two hands in which the conch and the discus have been placed.

4) The varada posture of the lower right hand and the kaṭyāvalambita posture of the lower left hand.

It is believed that the image is a swayaṁbhū or it must have been made at a time, when āgamic texts were not codified. The posture denotes the fact that if one surrenders at the Lord's feet, he obtains the supreme grace. This seems to have a bearing on the boon given to Mahābali by the Lord. Even Nammālvār makes reference to this episode. The entire world was measured up by the Lord in two strides and for the third stride, Mahābali had to offer his head and thereby got the greatest boon of salvation.[21]

5) The Kaustubha hanging centrally on the chest is characteristic of Viṣṇu.

6) There is no Nāgābharaṇam on the idol itself. It is only an ornament presented later by devotees. But Ādiśeṣha, associated with Viṣṇu and the mañtrapuṣpam, which is recited daily, makes reference to this. These facts are based on the evidence of arcakas over a number of years.

7) Bilva is counted among the eight punya puṣpas even in Viṣṇu worship. According to Dr. Ramesan, the authorities quoted are :

   i) Pādma Samhita - 12th Adhyāya (Çaryapāda).

   ii) Bhṛgu Samhita

   From the detailed examination of the above points it has been established that the shrine is one of Viṣṇu. From the crowds that visit this shrine, it may be said that the Lord is Sarvabhūtāntarātma worshipped by one and all.

The latter half of the 11th century and the first quarter of the 12th century A.D. saw the activities of Rāmānuja dedicated to the cause of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Śrī Venkaṭāçala Ithihāsamāla, a work compiled by Anantārya, refers to Rāmānuja's second visit to Tirupati. As we have seen before, the worship at Tirumalai was done in accordance with the system of Vaikhānasa āgama. In course of time, there must have occurred some irregularities in worship. Since the conch and discus were not adorning the image any more, the priests became indifferent. Besides, many Vaiṣṇavas deserted Tirumalai and migrated elsewhere.

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21. Tiruvāimoli - III decad, the 7th and the 10th stanzas.

The Śaivites took over the temple saying that Lord Subrahmaṇya, by shedding his ornaments and weapons was doing penance here. Thereafter the holy tank was named as Svāmi (Subrahmaṇya) Puṣkariṇi. However, the tīrthas associated with Kumārasvami or Subrahmaṇya are not known as Puṣkariṇi but as Kumāradhārā. The Varāha Purāṇa states that the Svāmi Puṣkariṇi is a tank which Viṣṇu brought down to earth from Vaikuṇṭa. Moreover, the Lord's image has only four arms and one face whereas Skanda normally has six faces and twelve hands.

The literary evidence anterior to the eighth century comprises of the ālvārs' song.besides the references available in the ancient Tamil literature. The Nāyanmārs, the śaivite saints, have made no mention of this shrine, though they have not left a single shrine of Śiva unsung. For example, Kālahasti, close to Tirupati, gets its proper place. Why did not the Nāyanmārs in their exclusive adoration of Śiva, sing of this temple too, if it had been a Śiva shrine ?

Traditional accounts say, that Rāmānuja along with a group of śaivites placed weapons of Viṣṇu and that of Śiva in the sanctum and got them locked. In the early morning, when the sanctum was opened, the Lord was pleased to have adorned himself with the conch and the discus and this established that the shrine was of Lord Śrīnivasa. According to the Vaikhānasa āgama, the Lord was consecrated.

Rāmānuja's next visit to Tirumalai came in 1052 A.D. when he took over the temple administration. Rāmānuja appointed two or three assistants, ekāṅgīs (bachelors) to assist the sanyāsin with different departments of work. He instituted the chanting of the relevant Prabandha hymns on occasions. The person who was put in charge of this was made the head sanyāsin, with the title of Ṣaṭakopayati. He too was assisted by four ekāṇgīs. The whole set up was controlled by Yādavarāya, who in all matters relating to the temple had to act on the advice of Anantārya, Rāmānuja's own disciple.

Later inscriptions mention the gardens and other features named after Rāmānuja and Anantārya, which historically substantiate the former's reforms.[22] The great achievement of

22. Dr. Ramesan - Tirumala temple inscription nos.: 171,173,175,mention the Tirunandavana flower garden of Rāmānuja,op. cit.

Rāmānuja was the publication of Yādavarāya's award declaring the shrine to be one of Viṣṇu and performance of purificatory rites in the temple. He got repaired the Vimāna tower rising above the temple known as the Ānanda Nilaya, according to Vaikhanasa āgama.

As the devotee enters the temple, he is wonderstruck by the grandeur of the inner dome. His pilgrimage culminates in the sanctum, where the glimpses of the deity make him conscious of his own insignificance. There is a long list of persons who have contributed to the vimāna kaiṅkarya from 839 A.D. to 1909 A.D. with Rāmānuja being the pioneer. He is said to have adorned the deity with a gold necklace along with an image of Padmāvati on a śukla dvādaśi Friday. He also arranged for the holy bath of the Lord's image, a practice followed even now, along with "Nāççiār Tirumoli", since these hymns reflect the pangs of Āṇḍāl for joining the over soul. At this time the Puruṣa Sūkta is also chanted. All the jewels are removed on thursdays and the Lord is dressed in flowers, which is known as 'Pūlangi'. Rāmānuja entrusted all these duties to the descendants of the early Vaikhānasa priests.

Besides these, he made arrangement for the deification of the Ālvārs, but in Tirupati (foot hill) only since some Ālvārs thought it profane to walk over the hills.

Anantārya, at his master's bidding, cultivated a flower garden, named Rāmānujam and offered the flowers for the Lord. Many ekāṅgīs of the later dates dedicated themselves to this kaiṅkarya. Two of these were Uḍayavar Kōil Aṇṇan[23] and Hastigiri Dāsar[24].

After the deification of the Ālvārs, proper arrangements were made for their daily worship supervised by some jīyars. These are similar instances of jī yār's role. In Saka 1397[25] Rāmānuja's shrine was managed by Yatirāja Jīyar and Nammālvār's shrine by another jīyar. Some ekāngīs Vaiṣṇavas were managing Tirumaṅgai Ālvār's shrine.[26]

The present day Uḍayavar shrines and that of Periālvār are found at the foothill, Nammālvār's at Kapila Tīrtham and of the

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23. Dr. Ramesan - Tirupati temple inscription no.274,ibid.
24. Dr. Ramesan - ibid , inscription no.341.
25. Dr. Ramesan - ibid , G.T no.145.
26. Dr. Ramesan - ibid , inscription no.333.

others at Govindarājapuram are positive proofs of Rāmānuja's influence on this temple.

Besides these, a number of mathas of Śrī Vaiṣṇavas came into existence as an indication of the establishment of Rāmānuja's faith in the place. Among these are Tirumalaisippirān maṭham at Tirumala[27], Vaṇ Ṣaṭakopamaṭham[28] Perarullān maṭham etc.. These maṭhams served as centres of Śrī Vaiṣṇava learning and faith.

Free feeding houses designated as Rāmānujakūṭas were established in and around Viṣṇu temples. The name Rāmānujan or Rāmānuja putteri and Tiruvīdi the street named after him were visible marks of Rāmānuja's profound influence on the minds of his followers.[29]

Recitation by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava laity, ekāṅgīs, sāttādars and Śattinavas of the Iyalpa and of Rāmānuja Nurrantadi in the presence of deities on festive occasions became prominent in later days, simply because of Rāmānuja's reverence for the Ālvārs. This influence percolated to the level of the disciples.

Rāmānuja must have stressed into the routine of worship the genesis of the Adhyayana utsavam. In his time probably the same festival was not conducted. This is proved by the earliest available reference to the festival being only about 1400 A.D. and the latest is in 1635 A.D.

After returning from Melkōṭe, Rāmānuja proceeded to Śrīrangam where he lived for another two decades, during which period he finished the Śrībhāṣya. There remains a contradiction due to lack of corroborative evidence in support of the traditional accounts and these are not fitting into the known chronology of the çola kings. Anyway it is ascertained that Kulōttunga II (1135-50 A.D.), had anti-Vaiṣṇava feelings. In the course of the renovation of the Çidambaram temple it is attested by contemporary inscriptions and literature. Probably, the events of the period lingered in memory and later legends were woven round Rāmānuja.

Once, when he was discoursing happily on the tenets of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, the fanatic çola king ordered Govindarāja's utsava mūrti in Çidambaram (known as Tiruçitrakūṭam in Vaiṣṇava

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27. Dr. Ramesan - ibid , inscription no.335.
28. Dr. Ramesan - ibid , inscription no.276.
29. Dr. Ramesan - ibid , inscription no.311-340.

parlance) to be thrown in to the sea, since it was Viṣṇu's place of rest (śayanam). The king's order might have been an act of reprisal against Kūreśa's impudence. Rāmānuja stayed in the Hoysāla Country till the death of the King - 1120 A.D. During this period the idol was left safely in Tirupati. So it became necessary to install the shrine of Govindarāja.

We find that Rāmānuja's life-long activities mainly were: (i) systematization of a detailed code of temple procedure which was greatly aided by permanent endowment (ii) establishment of his disciples and their descendants in the Vaiṣṇava centres under the name of ācārya puruṣas represented by certain families like Anandanpillai No. : 224-233, Kandādai and Paravastu to name a few and also by appointing ekāngīs.

There was a practical difficulty in offering daily abhiṣekas to the Tirumala's Dhruvamūrti which was of a very large size. The installation of a silver replica of Śrīnivasa (Bhoga Śrīnivasa) obviated such difficulties. To provide food offerings for this deity, Samavai, a Pallava queen purchased out-right some of the lands belonging to Tiruçuganūr, sometime in the third quarter of the 10th century.[30] Samavai also presented a kirīṭam[31], a necklace and other ornaments for the image.

The management of the property and the performance of the services were left to the managers of the Tirumalai temple. So, there was no conflict between the Vaikhanasa temple at Tirumalai and Pāñcarātra one at Tiruçuganūr. According to Vīrarāghavaçārya, even as late as 1234 A.D. (No.40, Vol.1) the hall of the latter was the meeting place of the Sabhaiyārs and the Nāṭṭārs on important occasions.

Earlier, pilgrims found it hard to ascend the hill after a ten mile walk from Tiruçuganūr. Therefore, they were content with worshipping the proxy Gods at the foothill. To popularise the pilgrimage to Tirumalai Rāmānuja felt the necessity of a new township. He found Kōṭṭūr village was the most ideal one for the purpose. South of this village was a temple dedicated to Śrī Pārthasārathīsvāmi near which the families of the Tirumalai arçakas lived. After the installation of the silver image of Maṇavālaperumāl the town of Tirupati was founded by Rāmānuja who planned the city with four Rājavīdis - a north māda street

30. Dr. Ramesan - ibid , inscription nos.18,19.
31. Dr. Ramesan - ibid ,p.281.

- Ayyangār Tiruvīdi and a sannidhi street. There is no inscriptional evidence of this fact but then the shrine of Rāmānuja in Tirupati bearing inscriptions on its west and south walls and standing outside the inner gopuram of Sri Govindaraja's temple refers to the year 1224 A.D. Rāmānuja's shrine is next to that of Tirumalai Naṁbi's, and it is generally inferred that the inner gopuram and prakāram of the Tirupati temple were built among the main shrine during Rāmānuja's time. This inscription says that the worship of the shrine was conducted by a disciple.

In comparison with the temple at Tiruçuganūr, where nature was bountiful with the svarṇamukhi river and its channels and where many Srivaiṣṇavas resided, it was difficult to make Tirupati a flourishing town. Therefore it must have been made obligatory on all Śrīvaiṣṇavas connected with Tirumalai to own property and reside in Tirupati. Thus the Vaikhānasa priests, the ācārya puruṣas, the temple servants and the merchants were obliged to reside in the township. There are inscriptional evidences to support this. The word Tirupati is Tamil and must have been coined by Rāmānuja who saw to it that the area surrounding the town was named Rāmānujapuram.

Rāmānuja must have chosen the Sri Pārthasārathī shrine at the appropriate site. Installation of the ancient idol of Govindarāja at the foothills would have been further appealing to the Śrīvaiṣṇava devotees and pilgrims. They could halt for a day down the hill, partake of the consecrated food, take a bath in the ālvar tīrtham and then ascend the seven hills. We generally call it Govindarāja's shrine (sannidhi) and not his temple, because there was already a temple for Sri Pārthasārathī, the inner gopuram of Śrī Govindarāja's shrine was annexed to it. Rāmānuja visited Tirupati and Tirumalai in 1129-30 A.D., Soumya year, when he was 102 years old. Traditional accounts support this fact. The reconsecration of Sri Govindarājasvāmi took place in 1130 A.D., which is confirmed by a mantrapushpam portion of the daily pūjā which reads as follows :

"Phālgune mase pūrṇāyām uttarakṣendu vāsare Govinda rājo Bhagvān" is said to have manifested Himself. This date is probably corroborated with a Monday, 24th February, 1130 A.D., which day has been observed as Phulangi festival (flower decoration of Govindarāja). Inscription I85 in the inner gopuram proves its existence before 1219 A.D. Though the Pārthasārathi temple was of greater importance, in course of time it fell into oblivion. The reason according to Ramesan was "The shrine of

Pārthasārathi was constructed in the days of Rāyalu. Later on Bhāṣyakār Rāmānuja got the idol of Govindarāja from Çidambaram, built the shrine and its adjuncts and installed it. His greater spiritual faith was exhibited towards Govindarāja, and pūjā continued for Him. The reason for non-performance of pūjā for Pārthasārathi was that the idol being made of plaster was slightly deformed".

Between 1130 A.D of Govindarāja's installation and 1219 A.D. a period of 89 years elapsed. Between 1220 (Rāmānuja's temple inscriptions) and 1457, large endowments for food offerings and festival celebrations were given.

The year of the temple's construction has been a subject of much speculation arising from the guruparaṁparā accounts.[32] There is no doubt about the date of the ācārya's demise which must have been recorded correctly by Śrīvaiṣṇavas of those days. T.K.T. asserts that Dr. Iyengar has missed noting a fragmentary inscription on the east wall on the inner side, south of the first gopuram in the Tirumalai temple, which reads in Tamil (1) Ana Soumya, - In Soumya (2) Torunāl - on a certian day, (3) Rāmānujan - Rāmānujan (4) Emperumānār which makes a clear reference to Rāmānuja in a period of twilight when he was honorifically called Emperumānār (Our great Mahān). There were only two sovmya years in his life time between 1017 and 1137. These are 1069 and 1129 A.D. Rāmānuja's age must have been only 52, when he had not attained that eminence. So the only appropriate year is 1129-30. The Tirumalai inscription has found its place in a fragmentary state. The inner gopuram in Tirumalai was constructed after Rāmānuja's time in 1180 A.D. So, an inscription made in 1129-30 could not be there. The prākāram walls must have been constructed at a later date the second prākāram). The first prākāram or the Kōil ālvar, contained four long inscriptions when the reorientation was done. The walls must have been demolished to make room for the new walls of the Kōil ālvar. The stone rubble must have been used for building the first prākāram walls (The Mukkoṭi Pradakṣiṇa). Some stones went into paving the floors and some in the first tier of the main gopuram. The fragment under reference must be one such. The inference, therefore, is that Rāmānuja visited Tirupati and Tirumalai in 1129-30 sowmya year. When he was 102 years old. (Traditional accounts also support this).

32. T.K.T. Viraraghavacarya - History of Tirupati,p.362.

The only soumya year 1129 in which Phālguna month Pūrṇima tithi and Uttarā Nakṣatram coincided with a Monday and it was 24th February, 1130 A.D Therefore, with confidence, we can say that Rāmānuja installed Govindarāja on the above date. Besides, the gopuram and prākāra walls there are a few other adjacent structures which are essential components of the Sri Govindarāja temple. These are the Dvārapālas on either side of the entrance to the shrine in the çitrakūṭa manṭapam. Garuḍa, the flag staff and the balipīṭham, Hanuman shrine one or two manṭapas were all specially constructed to serve the needs of the main shrine. The earliest inscription (1.223) we have outside the inner gopuram which can in some manner be a clue to the probable date of construction of the outer gopuram and the prākāram walls is the one on the north wall outside the verandah in front of the Salai Naççiār temple

Thus we find the construction of the temple structures was a matter of slow and continued progress. Between 1130 A.D. (Govindarāja's installation), and construction of the inner gopuram in 1219 A.D., there lies a period of 89 years.Between Rāmānuja's temple inscriptions of 1120 A.D., and the inscriptions of 1457 A.D., there is an interval of 337 years (?). There were of course some endowments during the later interval for daily food offerings and for the festival celebrated - From 1330 A.D. onwards when the Vijaya nagar empire stood on a firm basis, Saluva Narasimha took an abiding interest in these temples for daily pūjās. Besides the gopuram and prākāram walls, few more structures were built.

From the time of Nāthamuni, nobody tampered with Vaikhānasa system. The food offered was simple, the kainkaryaparas were to be satisfied with what they got. They were also enjoined to lead a celibate life, while at Tirumalai. They could go to Tirupati to have a relaxation in family life. There was the faith that the Lord of the Tiruvengaḍa hills granted all human desires, material or spiritual, leading by stages to the grant of a boon of divine realisation. The ālvars have sung of this unequivocally. When Ghaṭṭideva one of the Yādava Rāyas built the temple under the spiritual inspiration of Rāmānuja, it must have been for spiritual welfare.

This normal course of temple worship underwent a change consequent to the influx of the Tamil Śrīvaiṣṇavas of the south who were well versed in the Bhakti form of worship (Prabandham). All good things of this world were made for the

enjoyment of the deity and the bhakta became a nāyika of the Lord; He eats the same food, as the prasād. Thus equipped, he sings the Lord's praise. The sacred Veda and the Prabandham hymns were recited. The Emperumānadiyār (vestal virgins) danced, sang and offered kumbha ārati at the close of the street procession. As against this in Tirumalai under the Vaikhānasa influence, response to these activities must have been poor. From the beginning, artificial aid and was given in the form of emoluments for adhyāpakam and Vedapārāyanam. The vestal virgins had to be remunerated. Festivals were not sufficiently grandiose till such time as Kantādai Rāmānuja Iyengar took over in 1468. According to legend, the Mūlavar is said to have directed that nothing except four Nāligais (measures) of rice be offered in the sanctum, which has been strictly adhered to ever since 966 A.D.. The other kāmyārtha offerings are made only outside the sanctum.

The next point of individuality is that the daily routine of worship of the Mūlavar and others take precedence over any other item of festival, even if it meant advancing the day-break by some hours - what is technically known as Rāppadiṭṭanam. After Dharmadarśanam, the festivals start. Once the flag is hoisted the Utsavar with His Consorts occupies a separate pavilion, in olden days it was the Tirumāmaṇi manṭapam, the Kalyāṇa manṭapam. Mūlavar is the least concerned with the festivals which indicate material benefits. The old simplicity is still maintained.

The Vaikhānasa ārçakas in Tirumalai (before 966 A.D.) were Telugu speaking following the old customs and adhering to the Çāndra mānasa panchāngam.[33] It must be noted that the Tamil-speaking Tirumalai Naṁbi, was co-operative with the Vaikhānasas in rendering splendid service to the Lord and without any radical change in the method of worship.

Rāmānuja pursued the same policy in a more masterly manner by bringing into existence the nucleus of an administrative machinery which proved efficient. The temple festivals were however timed according to the solar vākya pançāñam of the southern Tamils. For this purpose Rāmānuja formed a committee consisting of the arçakas, Tirumalai Naṁbi and Anantālvān. During the Çola period, it was the

33. Traditional account.

Māḍapatyamseivar, the trustees and officers of the king who held the whip. The Stānattār were existing even before. They approached the ruler for provisions to be made for daily worship and the king granted Kuḍavūr, village and got them demarcated with Viṣṇuçakram stones.

Sri Nāthamuni compared the Tiruvāimoli to an ocean, an essence of the Upaniṣads, and Yāmuna acclaimed its author, Nammālvār as the kulapati which made Vaiṣṇavism broad based. In Śaiva temples, all the four castes in their descending order were seated in the Mukha manṭapam before the liṅgam. But in Vaiṣṇava temples all the four have been accommodated together. There was a congregational singing in Śrīrangam in Kulaśekhara's days - 8th cent. A.D. (Ref. II of Tirumoli) where caste was no barrier. The principle of equality was observed in practice by giving Tiruvāimoli equal status with the Vedas. The Adhyayanotsava is a demonstration of this ideal to this day. Rāmānuja extended this equality by wedging in some more selective pieces from the works of other ālvars in the course of the nityapūjā, without interfering with the vedic rituals. This was tried in Śrīrangam in the 12th century and was extended to Tirumalai only in the 15th century in relation to the Utsavamurti. Even today in Śrīrangam, some sāttāda Vaiṣṇavas are served with tirtham preferentially. In Tirumalai, all Vedics recited the Prabandham and received prasādam on equal footing. This brought together all the four castes in religious practices and obviated the creation of the non-brahmin maṭhā which was a feature of the śaivite religion.

Rāmānuja created a decentralised administration in the religious sphere. Of the seventy four seers, four were given jurisdiction for the exposition of the śrībhāṣya - the rest for the Prabandham. These seers spread the tenets of Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja and maintained the form of temple worship in both the āgamas. Though the Vedas were the monopoly of brāhmins, Prabandham became the common right of all castes. The Tamil country had a major proportion of non-brāhmins so the propagation of Prabandhams became popular, 700 ascetics went out and preached his philosophy. For the benefit of the hill tribes, some Sāttāda Vaiṣṇavas were given the seal of authority to preach.

The recitation of the Prabandham became an essential feature in Viṣṇu Temples and endowments on that count were known as Śrīvaiṣṇava Rakṣa. At a very advanced age, Rāmānuja

undertook his last visit to Tirupati. He made certain improvements in the arrangements already made by assigning to one sanyāsin, the affairs of the temple and keeping two or three bachelor assistants for certain departments of work. Rāmānuja also instituted the chanting of the Prabandha hymns in the proper form and appointed a special person for the job. He afterwards became the head sanyāsin with the title Ṣaṭhakōpayati who was assisted by four bachelors. They were supervised by Yādavarāya, and in all temple matters had to act with the advice of Anantārya.

Sri Rāmānuja's influence in Tirumala can be summarised as follows :

1) The setting up of flower gardens and their maintenance by ekāngīs.

2) Enshrining the Ālvārs in the temple like those of Tirumalisai etc..

3) Certain maṭhas of Sri Vaiṣṇavas came into existence as an indication of the establishment of faith in the place.

   a) Eg. Tirumalisaippirān maṭham at Tirumala - 335 Tirumala Tirupati - Vasanṭhagōpan maṭham -Tirumala Tirupati 276 Perarulālan Maṭham etc.. They became centres of Śrīvaiṣṇava faith and learning.

4) Following the deification of Rāmānuja, great enthusiasm prevailed which resulted in charities and benefactions. Feeding houses were designated by Saluva Narasimha - flower gardens by Anantasūri by name Rāmānujam - Rāmānuja-neri or Putteri (Nos.) 311 - 340 - Tirumala Tirupati and the street by name Rāmānuja Tiruvīdi, were the outward marks of Rāmānuja's influence on the minds of his followers.

5) The recitation by the Śrīvaiṣṇava laity, ekāngīs, the Sāttiṇavārs and Sāttādavārs of Tiruvāimoli, Iyalpā and Nurrandādi in the presence of deities on festive occasions became a routine in later days, owing to the reverence, Rāmānuja had for the Ālvārs and āçāryas. In short, the Prabandham became the mainstay of the Vaiṣṇavas.

6) The Adhyayana festival, though not an innovation introduced by Rāmānuja in the temple routine, was definitely stressed upon by him, as the best means of commemorating the great legacy of the Ālvār's works.

7) Recitation of several portions of the Prabandham in all Viṣṇu temples daily and during Adhyayanotsavas, must have been instituted by Rāmānuja. Since the Vedas were inaccessible to the ordinary men, Rāmānuja's sympathy for them was unbounded, and hence he opened the door of highest spiritual knowledge to all men irrespective of caste, creed and sex.

These were followed by the formulation and systematisation of a detailed code of temple procedure. Offering for the deities increased. Permanent endowments were pouring in. Rāmānuja's disciples were seated in various Vaisnava centres as āçāryapurusas like those of Ānandanpillai, Prativāṇdibhayankaram Āṇṇan and Paravastu families and also the acolytes known as ekāngīs for rendering service in Viṣṇu temples.

THE SEPARATION OF SECULAR ADMINISTRATION FROM RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA

Pillai Lokaçārya and Vedānta Deśika and other ācārya puruṣas guided not only the Tamil country, but also succeeded in bringing Viśiṣṭādvaita into prominence by their discourses and educating the masses about religion in a much wider region. Vedānta Deśika's unsurpassable volumes of literature (especially the Rahasyas) were the highest truths. Similar work was done in Kannada and Telugu countries for propagating Viśiṣṭādvaita, retaining the spiritual position in Tirumalai and Tirupati and leaving the Sthānattar to manage secular affairs. Adivaṇ Ṣaṭakōpa Jīyar started the evangelical mission in the 15th century and carried it to the Telugu country, even penetrating Orissa. From 1390, this system worked very well in Tirumalai unlike other shrines. The Brahma Tantra Parakāla Maṭham, Tālappākkam āçāryas, and Vyāsarāya maṭham, were all flourishing during the time of Kṛṣṇadevarāya. All these maṭhas thought it a privilege to receive honours from the shrine standing on the sacred hill, with a huge following of Kannada, Tamil Telugu peoples. The Lord drew more and more devotees as centuries rolled on.

Constant wars of the Vijayanagara Kings with the Bahmani sultans and famine condition put a great strain on the economy of the kingdom and the temple, and large scale changes for the worse came in due course of time.

RĀMĀNUJA'S REFORMS IN ADMINISTRATION IN TIRUPATI:

Rāmānuja went to Tirupati thrice. The first time was to learn Rāmayana from Tirumalai Nambi at the foothill.

The second time, when there was a dispute about the deities' origin. Rāmānuja offered the conch and the discus to the Lord who accepted it with grace, during which time he established the temple for Govindarāja at Tirupati and arranged for its smooth administration.

The third time from 1052 to 1053 - he took over the administration of the temple, and established his own maṭha appointing four ekāṅgīs for a flawless administration.

Kaṭṭiyam Yādava Rāya a chieftain of the Çola empire, became his disciple and was a great benefactor during this time. He is also known as Yādava Nārāyaṇa. Rāmānuja, according to the Vaikhānasa āgama consecrated the Narasimha, Venkaṭeśa deities on the vimāna and inaugurated and established the temple as a Viṣṇu ālaya and placed a golden Lakṣmī pendant on the chest of the Lord. While during the Tirumanjanam Nāççiar Tirumoli was chanted, the nāmam was applied on the forehead of the Lord for the three days and rest of the four days pearl dust with camphor was applied. Rāmānuja got four streets constructed for Brahmotsava and consecrated the Malaikkiniya Ninrapirān and gave a nāgābharaṇam which adorns the Lord's hand. It is said that he has fixed a yantra in the temple which attracts both crowd and aiśvarya. Thus the mūlavar came to be known as Kançana Brahman. The balance in treatment of the Govindarāja shrine and the Āṇḍāl shrine to its right is an evidence of Rāmānuja's genius.

The Vijayanagara kings gave lot of benefaction and jewels. Kṛṣṇadevaraya is said to have visited Tirupati seven times. The idol of Rāmānuja in Gnānamudra was given by Rāmānuja himself to Anantalvān and was installed by Yādavarāja. Many donations were made to his shrine for lamps and flowers.

There is a traditional belief that the shrines of Rāmānuja in Tirumalai and Tirupati were constructed more or less simultaneously soon after his death. According to the Guruparamparā, the shrine of Rāmānuja was constructed in Śrīrangam by Pillān, by Mudaliyāṇḍān in Śrīperumbudūr, by

Açç̄an in Melkoṭe and Naṭādūr Ālvān in Kāñçīpuram. Pillai Tirumalai installed one in Tirupati now called Ḍova Bhāṣyakāra sannidhi, where Tirumalai prasādams were presented to Rāmānuja on the occasion of his visit.

Sri Rāmānuja's association with Tirumala seems to have been very intimate. His maternal uncle Tirumalai Naṁbi was a Kainkaryapara of Tirumalai from whom he inherited most probably the Kaiṅkarya bhāva.[34]

Later, while he revisited Tirumalai as the acknowledged leader of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, he was given temple honours in the space where the Ḍova Bhāṣyakāra Sannidhi in Govinda Rājapuram stands and also at Mokalla Parvatam.

One must be aware of the tradition that when the saivites claimed the temple to be theirs Rāmānuja established it as a Vaiṣṇava shrine. In fact, in his Magnum Opus, Śrībhāṣya, the opening verse equates Lord Śrīnivasa to the Brahman who may endow him (Rāmānuja) with bhakti, and not mere intellectual lead. Rāmānuja emphasised that the Parabrahman has manifested on the Tirumalai Hill as Śrīnivasa.

He installed and consecrated the idol of Govindarājasvāmi which was cast away from Çidaṃbāram by Kulottunga I. He founded the little village surrounding the temple which was known for a longtime as Rāmānujapuram. Tirupati became a flourishing town inhabited by the devotees.

As the Parthasārathi temple was consecrated according to Vaikhānasa āgama, the installation of Govindarāja at a later date must have conformed to the same āgama. The Tiruçukanūr village, which had the Svarṇamukhī river and its spring channels was the home of one hundred and eight learned Śrīvaiṣṇava families. As against this making Tirupati as a flourishing village must have been an uphill task. Probably it was made obligatory for the Vaiṣṇavas connected with Tirumalai temple to settle in Tirupati. There seems to be an inscription which bears evidence to the above fact.

In 1219 the queen of Vīranarasiṁha Yādavarāya made an endowment for Nandā Vilakku. The management of the temple with a separate income and expenditure was in the hands of the Tirumalai temple. Alongwith the royal endowments, given during

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14. T.K.T. Viraraghavacarya - op. cit.,p.240

festival times and endowments of private charity helped augmenting the temple coffer. In fact, the growth of Tirupati in size and importance was in proportion to the increasing pilgrim traffic.

Rāmānuja gave the Tamil name to this place Tirupati[35], In the çola period where there was already a temple for Pārthasārathī. Tirupati must have been a part of the village of Koṭṭūr. The portion of the town surrounding the temple came to be known as Rāmānujapuram.

The inference therefore, is correct that Rāmānuja visited Tirupati and Tirumalai in 1129-30 soumya year 1129, when he was 102 years old (traditional accounts confirm this).

When all these efforts were made by Rāmānuja it is a little strange that no shrine was dedicated to him in Tirumalai till 1200 A.D. There are sporadic inscriptions in some temples since they were all maintained by their own independent corpus. So, also the shrines of Rāmānuja, Tirumañkai and Tirumalai Naṁbi must have had their funds. But, in Tirumalai, Rāmānuja's shrine has been a part of the greater pantheon. The Ālvārs do not find a place there, since the Vaikhānasa āgama was in vogue and Rāmānuja did not consider it desirable to revoke the old arrangement to which his own uncle was a party. It is yet strange to find how Rāmānuja's name was not associated with any endowment until 1476. The celebration of the Çittirai tirunāl (12 days) on the birth asterism of Rāmānuja for the recitation of the Prabandhams is a clear explanation. The Vaikhānasas objected to the recital of the Prabandhas as promulgated by Ālavandār and Rāmānuja because the worship was carried on according to the āgamic rituals based on the Vedic texts.

RECITALS

The first attempt at recitals was made by someone who endowed lands. The Kaikkolārs, attached to the temples of Tirumalai and Govindarājapuram were made permanent tenants to deliver certain quantities of paddy annually for food offerings to Govindarāja during Vaikāsi festivals in connection with the recitation of Tirumoli inscription (1.61).[36] The Upaniṣad stresses the point that food is the foundation of life, knowledge and culture of spiritual evolution. It is therefore, Brahman itself.

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35. T.K.T. Viraraghavacarya - ibid.,p.361
36. T.K.T. Viraraghavacarya - ibid.,p.1015

Tirumoli recitals were commenced in 1253, only in Tirupati. The inscription assigned to date about 1250-1255 A.D. also says that The Tiruppāvai was sung in Tirumalai during the Çittirai festival. The food offering during this time was known as Tiruppāvaippadi. But the Tirumoli and the Tiruvāimoli were not sung in Tirumalai. The recitals probably started after the renovation of the temple in 1250 A.D. The recitation of the Tirumoli and Tiruppāvai were the first attempts. It must have been difficult to train a choiç of singers for the 1102 verses. It was difficult for the local residents to master the verses and hence experts from outside had to be called. Rāja Rāja Deva (Çola) in his 19th year issued an edict asking the inhabitants of the villages of the Kuḍavar Nāḍu to contribute paddy for the newly installed Tirumankai shrine. He might have been responsible for the Tirumoli recital in Govindarāja's shrine in 1253, and also for Tiruppāvai in Tirumalai by about this time (-1.74).

According to an inscription (- 1-107, 26-1-1360 A.D.[37]) on the inner side of the south wall of the first inner gopuram in Tirumalai, the endowment is for cooked food - Tiruppōnakam, for the deity for ten days during Tiruvāimoli recital.

There are two inscriptions in an incomplete condition which shows that Ananṭālvān Venkaṭathurai took a pledge to carry on the tirumañjana kainkārya. One reads this in the mārgali month. Anantālvān's grandson offered for kind acceptance for Amudupaḍi, and Sāttupaḍi. There is no clear evidence to show from this whether there was a shrine of Rāmānuja at that time or whether Amuduppaḍi, Sattuppaḍi were meant for Tiruvenkaṭamuḍaiyān for the Dhanurmāsa food offering.

The Tirumalai Temple in those days had not sufficient resources to carry on the daily nimandam and when this was represented by the Sthānattār to Tirukkālaṭṭideva, Yādavarāya in his 19th rested year, granted donation of wet and dry lands in Kuḍavūr. Thus, it can be assumed that the temple was in dire need of funds when the king made his inscription of Amuduppaḍi and Sattuppaḍi. It is T.K.T.'s view that Rāmānuja himself must have asked his disciple to supply the paḍis for the Lord at his time, as there was no shrine for Rāmānuja in Tirupati or Tirumalai.

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37. T.K.T. Viraraghavacarya - ibid.,p.1021

The offering of food by the temple is confirmed by an earlier inscription in Tiruçukanūr by about 890 A.D.[38] which states that one Guṇavān Aparājitan (King of Tirugalas) made an endowment of some gold from the interest, whereon two brāhmins were to be fed daily with rice powdered eighteen times. This shows great care was taken to feed the pilgrims with clean food.

The daily supply of amudupaḍi is referred in an inscription dated 1008 A.D.[39] (Inscription 1-18 Çola period) gives information about amudupaḍi and tirumañjanas, rice with ghee, milk, curds, honey, gingelly, salt, pepper and betel leaves, tamarind, sugar etc.

Vīra Rākṣasa's grant of land in 1193 A.D.[40] states that it was for the (inscription 1-89) a Tirumandira Tirupponakam meaning cooked food. The original idea in making food offerings to the idol seems to have been that of providing a sample of whole some food for those who were doing service in the temple and also for the pilgrims - Deśandris. During festivals, food was prepared from the endowments by donors.

The first endowment for food offering is mentioned in an inscription of 966 A.D. when Maṇavālapperumāl or Bhoga Śrīnivasa was consecrated in Tirumalai temple.

Food was prepared out of the annual income from the endowments which were made in cash or in the shape of cultivable lands. The frequent wars among the Hindu rulers and the Muslim invasions affected agriculture and trade. Only the very rich were in a position to make endowments which could be enough to feed the pilgrims and the worshippers. From the earliest days till the 14th century A.D. food was simple with little vegetables and ghee. With the ascent of the Vijayanagara rulers, the old prosperity was restored and delicious food offerings were made once more.

For the benefit of the orthodox, there was, during later periods, a food offering called alamkāram or of Śuddhanna tirupponakam, which was a reversion to the original food offering instituted by Samavai in the 10th century A.D.. These were sent to the Rāmānuja-kūṭam also for distribution.[41] The Sthānattār and

38. T.K.T. Viraraghavacarya - ibid.
39. T.K.T. Viraraghavacarya - ibid.
40. T.K.T. Viraraghavacarya - ibid.
41. T.K.T. Viraraghavacarya - ibid.,p.7.

other temple servants had appropriated 3/4 share of each taligai for distribution among themselves, leaving the remaining quarter share to the donor known as Viṭṭavaṉ Vilukkāḍu which in turn was sometimes diverted for distribution to the pilgrims. The pilgrims who depended for their food upon the temple prasādam had to purchase it from the temple servants. Special endowments were made for festival needs. Even Çatrams and maṭhams supplemented this activity.Donors purposely spent money on some kind of food offering to the deity which would benefit the poor and at the same time be attractive to others. This kind of offering is known as Tiruppāvāḍai. Big cauldrons of tirupponakam were taken to the sanctum for naivedyam. The āgamas sanction the depositing of cooked rice on the Mukha manṭapam floor. The whole mass is heaped up in a pyramidal trapezoid shape. Rice is treated with other ingredients. The utsava murti is bought from the inner sanctorum and the offering is made then. The whole mass is removed by the poor people of the surrounding villages. This is real poor feeding.

RĀMĀNUJA KŪṬAM OR FEEDING HOUSES :

It has been the practice in this temple to distribute a portion of the offered food freely among devotees as prasādam. Donors give money for this purpose. The responsibility was taken up by the Sthānattār - managers of the temple. The earliest reference to feeding occurs in No.220 - G.T. belonging to the 10th century. Another one is found in the 14th century. The credit for instituting a Rāmānuja Kūṭam for free feeding unconnected with the temple authorities goes to Saluva-narasimha-deva-mahārāya who built two of them, one in Tirumala and other in Tirupati and placed them under the management of Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Iyengār. The next instance is of a donation of one Nāli or Pāleḍu Kulaṁbu offered to Venkaṭesvara during Ardhayāma. Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya and his two queens donated a Çatram for feeding the poor. With the increase of the festivals, number of pilgrims also increased in due course of time. For their convenience of boarding and lodging, larger benefactions poured in from the rulers at the instance of some prominent Vaiṣṇava preceptors and devotees of Venkaṭesvara. This enhanced the prosperity of the temple. The inscriptions in Tirumalai cover a period from the 9th to the 16th centuries, and provide us with information on the endowments granted during the medieval period. Since they represent endowments to the Lord to which great sanctity was attached, these are totally reliable as data for drawing correct conclusions.

These include, mainly the endowments of land, money for ornaments, decoration and naivedyam of the Lord. These inscriptions clearly indicate that the two temples of Govindarāja and Venkaṭeśvara enjoyed patronage of sovereigns. A small list of the inscriptions given below :

i) The queen of Parāntaka II Sundara-Çola, "the King who slept at the Golden-Hall", and daughter of Çeramān, presented to Śrī Venkaṭeśvara a paṭṭam or plate for the forehead, set with precious stones, in the 16th year at the reign of Rājarāja I (equivalent to 1001 A.D.).[42]

ii) A Pallava queen, by name Samavai, who presented a krīṭam (diadem), a necklace of four strings and other ornaments for the hands, waist and feet of Sri Venkaṭeśvara and consecrated a silver image of His under the appellation of Maṇavālapperumāl, provided for processions for this image and endowed the temple with lands in Tiruçukanur (Tiruçānūr), sometime in the third quarter of the 10th century.[43]

iii) Jaṭavarman Sundara-Paṇḍya I (1250 to 1275 A.D.) who placed a gilded kalaṣa over the vimāna of Sri Venkaṭeśvara's shrine.

iv) The queen of Vīra-Narasimha Yādavarāya, a Çola subordinate of the 13th cent. who instituted a fresh Brahmōtsavam in the Tamil month of Āni for Sri Govindarāja, in addition to the primary one held in Vaikāśi, constructed a four-faced car and made a gift of half the village of Paindapalli for meeting the expenses of the newly started festival and for effecting repairs to the temple from the balance, if any.

v) Saluva Narasimha's devotion followed the usual channel of making gifts of villages in the several parts of the kingdom between the Saka years 1378 and 1410.

vi) Kṛṣṇadevarāya not only presented diadems and, ornaments set with precious stones, gold and silver vessels, both for the Mūlamurti and the processional images, but also endowed the temple with villages in the districts of Çandragiri, Udayagiri and Penukoṇḍa. His two queens Tirumaladevi and Çinnadevi were present

42. Dr. Ramesan - The Tirumala temple inscription no.17,op. cit.
43. Dr. Ramesan -ibid.,inscription nos.,18,19.

with him during almost all his visits to Tirumala and they shared with him the credit for the gifts and grants which were made by him between Śaka 1434 and 1442.

To summarise the whole thing we may say that Rāmānuja's connection with Tirupati began with Tirumalai Naṁbi - his uncle from whom he learned the esoteric meaning of the Ramayana as one of the congenial studies for the high office, he held. the second occasion was when he visited Tirupati later. the worship in Tirupati was in accordance with Vaikhānasa āgama but there were some irregularities in the conduct of worship. Rāmānuja introduced several reforms in connection with the worship and the festivals in the temple as per the Venkateśa Ithihāssmāla. Tirumalai Naṁbi and Anaṅtārya were deputed for the service of God. During this time, Rāmānuja offered the conch and discus to the Lord who accepted it with grace.

Rāmānuja is said to have visited Tirupati again at a very advanced age. During this time, he carried out certain improvements in the arrangements that he had already made by appointing one sanyāsin who had to look after the affairs of the temple disinterestedly. Two or three assistants who were bachelors ran certain departments. He also instituted chanting of the Prabandham in proper form and a special person was appointed in charge of it, who afterwards became the head sanyāsin with the title Ṣaṭhakopayati. Four other ekāngīs were to assist him. they were to be supervised and controlled by Yādavarāja, who in all matters relating to the temple acted according to the advice of Anaṇtārya. Kaṭṭiyam Yādavarāya a chieftain of the Çola empire became his disciple. He was a great benefactor during this time. Rāmānuja consecrated the Narasimha and Venkaṭeśa Devatās on the vimāna according to the Vaikhānasa āgama and inaugurated and established the temple as viṣṇu ālaya; gave a gold Lakṣmī pendant to adorn the chest of the Lord and made arrangements for the chanting of Nāççiār Tirumoli during the holy bath. He also arranged the camphor nāmam for three days and the rest of the four days with a nāmam of pearl dust. He constructed the four streets for Brahma Utsava; consecrated the Malaikkiniya Niṇḍrapirān as Utsavamūrti and gave the jewel Nāgābharṇam for the Lord's hand. It is believed that he established the yaṇtra which attracts both crowd and aiśvaṛya. The installation of Āṇḍāl on the right hand side of Govindarāja without any difference in treatment of both the

rines is a masterly feat of Rāmānuja. The Vijayanagara Kings ve a lot of benefactions and jewels.

The idol of Rāmānuja was given by himself to Anantalvan d was installed by Yādavarāya. This idol is in the Gnāna mudra. ıny donations were made to the shrine for lamp and flowers.

Seven divisions of the work of Sri Venkaṭeśa Ithihāsamāla al with Rāmānuja's services to the temple. Inscription No. 171 d 173 mention the flower garden of Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja's 'orts consisted of the publication of Yādavarāya's award, after rforming the initial purificatory rights of ablution according to e Vaikhānasa āgama, to have repaired the Ānañda Nilaya māna and the offering of a gold necklace with an image of dmāvati to the deity. This is the first part. The next part was e performance of the weekly ablution, which he entrusted to e descendants of the early Vaikhānasa priests. He made rangements for the installation of the images of alvars since ıny of them thought it profane to walk up the hill he arranged stallation of their images on the foothill near Govindarāja's rine. Many ekāngīs and jīyars of later dates had followed the ample of Anaṇtālvān to rear flower gardens for the Lord. With e deification of the alvars and eventually of himself at a later te, provision was made for the daily worship supervised by e jīyars. For instance, Sri Rāmānuja's shrine was managed by e Yatirāja Jīyar and respectively by subsequent jīyars for the ganisation of the alvar's shrines as well. Thirdly, certain maṭhas me into existence like the Tirumalisaīppirān maṭhaṃ at rumala and Vaṇṣaṭhakopa maṭham, Perarulalān maṭham were instituted to serve as centres of Śrīvaiṣṇava learning and faith ıere from the propagation could be effectively organised. urthly, with the revered name of the master, free feeding - uses like the Rāmānuja Kūṭams were established. Names like māṇujaneri, Rāmānuja Tiruvīdi and Rāmānujapuram - all ofess Rāmānuja's deep influence on the minds of his followers. 'thly, the recitation by the Śrīvaiṣṇava laity and ekāngīs mprising of the Sāttinavārs and Sāttādavārs of Tiruvāimoli and ılpa on festive occasions became a routine. This shows the verence Rāmānuja held for the ālvārs. Sixthly, the lhyayanōtsavam though may not have been the innovation by mānuja but great stress was laid upon such a festival by him, d later it was conducted as in other Viṣṇu temples. It is said ıt Rāmānuja instituted the recitation of the several portions of e Prabandham daily and also during Adhyayanōtsavam for the

riod of twenty to twenty-five days to benefit the common ople. The Prabandhams were chanted instead of the Vedic antings. This shows the unbounded sympathy of Rāmānuja r the common man. The highest spiritual knowledge was sseminated to all without discrimination of caste and creed.

The influence of Rāmānuja's activities in the formulation d systematisation of a detailed code of temple procedure olved themselves into grand offerings, permanent endowments d also the establishment of his disciples and their descendants different Vaiṣṇava centres for the propagation of the faith ıder the appellation of āçārya puruṣas like Ānandanpillai, ındāḍai Prativādi- bhayankaram and Paravasṭu and attaching āngīes for rendering service to prominent Viṣṇu shrines.

To sum up, we cannot but feel that the darśan of the Lord a mystic experience. One cannot define it. : The mystic perience of communion with the ever present reality transcends nitations of space and time. Having tasted this bliss, the devotee ınts to return again and again, (punardarśanam). The miracle, e Lord performs in the mind of the devotee is the subtle change ith a lightness of spirit which leaves him with a serene sense satisfaction. The shrine of Tirumala is a proof of the fact that e temples are live institutions.

MELKOṬE TEMPLE

Meanwhile, having fully equipped himself with the sastras ıd vedānta and other scriptures (the Vaiṣṇava dharma) as the sciple of Tirukkoṣṭiyār Naṁbi and Tirumalai Āndān, runārāyana Perumāl, and Arayar Tirumalai Naṁbi Rāmānuja oceeded to collate his own interpretation of the Vedic texts ısed on the Vaiṣṇava doctrine, the Viśiṣṭādvaita. With the help Kurattālvān, he wrote the Śrī Bhāṣya. Later followed the edānta Dīpam, Sāram and Gītā Bhāṣyam. He held a Dikvijaya ıd appointed Mudali Āndān to exercise supreme control over e Śrīrangam temple during his absence. Ṣri Rāmānuja's ivyadesa Yātra was hailed by the Mūlabera at Śrīrangam. To solve the Buddhist, Jaina and Advaita conflicts, he — was ımmanded by Lord Ranga to weed out the unwanted orders ıd to establish the Vaiṣṇava dhārma. Rāmānuja left on his yātra ith his able disciples. His pilgrimage covered[44] Kumbhakoṇam,

Pin Palagiya Perumāl Jīya - Ārāyirappaḍi, p.223.

Sethu, Kurugur, Tiruvāṇparisaram, Tiru Anantapuram and many other shrines of Kerala, Dvāraka, Mathura and Salagrāmam. The long sojourn starting from Ahobilam, took him to Tirumalai. Traditional accounts say that the Śaivites claimed the temple there to be a Śiva shrine. But Rāmānuja succeeded in disproving their claim, partly through arguments and established that it was a shrine of Viṣṇu. This is believed to have been made possible by a direct indication from the Lord, which He gave by picking up and wearing the Vaiṣṇava emblems, while leaving the śaiva emblems unused on the floor. Rāmānuja then adorned the Lord with a golden pendant of Lakṣmī as a necklace.

He returned to Śrīrangam and resumed his preachings. At that time the Çola king, Kullottunga. I resolved to see that the entire Çola, kingdom embraced the Śaiva doctrine. He is depicted by biographers as a cruel-hearted and a narrow-minded person. He announced that if Rāmānuja could be bought to the Śaiva fold, his ambition would be fulfilled. In case Rāmānuja did not give up the Vaiṣṇava faith, he would even want to put him to death.

Accordingly, he sent his stalwart emissaries to bring Rāmānuja. Kurattālvān pleaded with Rāmānuja to flee to the western region and went to meet the king at least to save the Sri Vaiṣṇava Dharma. The Çola king demanded that Rāmānuja should sign a declaration, "There is no God higher than Śiva". Ālvān dressed in saffron robes and accompanied by Mahāpūrṇa, presented himself before the king and made a pun on the word "Śiva", when asked to sign the declaration. The king ordered the eyes of both the men to be blinded. Mahāpūrṇa died from the injury, while Ālvān went into retirement to Tirumālirunjolai.

Now starts the work of Rāmānuja in the Hoysala country. Govindācārya has given approximate dates of the chief events of Rāmānuja's life. But this chronology has been subjected to scrutiny by later scholars like Gopinath Rao and T.N. Subramanian. Kulottunga alias Krimikanṭa Çola is identified by Gopinath Rao as Kulottunga I. Professor K.A.N. Sastry identifies the king as Adhi Rajendra or Vira Rajendra, the last of the Çolas with whom the direct line came to a close. But historically, it was Kulottunga II who really exhibited anti-Vaiṣṇava feelings.

Professor T.N. Subramanian also identifies the fanatic Śaivite king as Kulottunga II, due to whom Rāmānuja had to leave for the Hoysāla territory. According to B.R. Gopal, this

ıference by Professor T.N. Subramanian seems to be nearer the :uth, since the available epigraphical evidence of the Mysore egion substantiate and coincide with the above chronology.

The exact date of Sri Rāmānuja's travel to Karnataka is not ecorded. He appears to have followed the course of the river Kāveri as far as Rāmanāthapuram, also known as Vāhni Puşkarīņi nd then proceeded to Tondanur via Mithilā Sāligrama which eemed to have had a large Jaina population who did not bviously welcome the newcomers. It is said that at the behest f Rāmānuja (Mudaliānḍān), Dāśrathi bathed Rāmānuja's feet in ıe local tank at Sāligrama and many Jains were converted to Sri 'aişņavism. Even today we find a small srine within which are ıstalled the[45] imprints of the feet of Rāmānuja. There is also a oly fountain of water which the pilgrims sprinkle on their heads. ı statue of Vaḍuga Nambi or Āndhrapūrņa, who embraced 'aişņavism then and there and became a devout disciple of ;āmānuja, can also be found.

Toṇḍanūr was the capital outpost of the Hoysāla king Viṭhala)evaraya who had a daughter possessed by some evil spirit. It ; mentioned as Yādavanārāyaṇa Çaturvedi Mangalam, meaning brahmin settlement. Sri Vaişṇavas are Śaraṇāgatas seeking efuge in God, surrendering to Him and call themselves as dāsas servants) or Tonḍan in Tamil.The former as Yādavapura, was robably changed to Toḍanūr, because one of the host of devotees ettled down there was Tonḍanūr Nambi, who on learning about ıe affliction of the princess, advised the royal couple to seek .āmānuja's help. Accordingly Rāmānuja went to the palace and rove the spirit. The king was so impressed that he embraced 'aişņavism and came to be known as Vişņu Vardhana.

According to the sthalapurāṇa of Śravaṇa Belgolā (local hronicle), the king destroyed 790 bastis, constructed the Pancha Iārāyaṇa temples and transferred to them all the land grants of ıe bastis. He also constructed a tank at Tonḍanūr, and stablished below it the Tirumala Sāgara çhatra for feeding in the .āmānuja Kūṭa, a choultry. The steps to the hill of Melkoṭe were lso built by him.

This caused an uproar among the Jainas. But Rāmānuja rgued with the Jaina disputants, vanquishing them completely.

;. Mysore state Gazette - Mandya,the Yoga Narasimha temple,on the spur of the hills,there is a reference of Rāmānuja seated in Padmāsana.

Thereafter he stayed in Tonḍanūr expounding the doctrine of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Many were converted to the Vaiṣṇava faith. Though besides the point, there is one interesting fact. Many Sri Vaiṣṇavas in the late tenth and the eleventh centuries[46] appear to have migrated to Karnataka, some from Srirangam along the river Kāveri and some others form Kāṇçi and Uttaramerur, following the course of the Pālār. Their settlements had some common features like they were dominated by Tamil brāhmins and all transactions were carried on in Tamil. These çaturvedimangalams were named after the çola kings. These facts prove that Sri Vaiṣṇavism had penetrated into the region decades before Rāmānuja.

These settlements were established soon after the Çola conquest of the Ganga Nolamba territory. The early Çolas were not content with[47] merely serving Vaiṣṇavism, but were committed to the promotion of economic interests of Tamil emigres, as well as their language and culture. It appears Rāmānuja was not entering an unknown land, but one of congenial society deeply influenced by the local Vaiṣṇavas.

Toṇḍanur Nambi lived the life of an ideal Vaiṣṇava and mediated for the treatment of the princess. After this success Rāmānuja was made the rājaguru of the Hoysālas and the king and other members of the royalty numbering thirteen thousand became Vaiṣṇavas. The presiding deity was already a well known object of worship before Sri Rāmānuja worshipped at the shrine in 1098 and even before, and he had his influence in rebuilding and renovating the temple.It seems to be historically correct that the traditional date of his reaching Toṇṇūr is 1099 A.D. Kali 4200, 1021 Bahudanya Guruvāram, when the idol of Viṣṇu was found by Rāmānuja[48]. With the blessings of Rāmānuja, Viṣṇuvardhan expanded his kingdom, and he and his consort were instrumental in building four more Tirunārāyaṇa shrines apart from the one at Melkoṭe in his region.[49] They are 1) Temple of Nambi Tambiran - Tonḍanūr, 2) Melkoṭe - Tirunārāyaṇa, 3) Kīrti Nārāyaṇa at Talakāḍu, 4) Vijaya Nārāyaṇa at Belūr and 5) Vīra Nārāyaṇa at Gaḍag.

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46. A Malur record of 1086 states - Kulottunga was pleased to establish settlements of people on all sides.
47. Ratan Parimoo (e. d.) - Vaiṣṇavism in Indian Arts and Culture,Vaiṣṇavism to Śrīvaiṣṇavism.
48. Mysore Gazette,Mandya,1967.
49. Kalyana Rama Iyengar - Research in Rāmānuja studies.

Melkoṭe was of course of the kingdom of Rāmānuja. He was ıailed as the ācārya and guardian of the temple. In a dream the ٕord bade Rāmānuja to move to Melkoṭe, where he would find he holy earth. Accordingly, next morning he found the holy ːarth and a vigraha of the Lord. In due course He was installed ıs Tirunārāyaṇa. In the Bahudanya year, puśyamānam ;uklapakśam, çaturdaśi, the deity was given a holy bath and vorship. Once the deity was installed according to Pāñcarātra ıgama, Rāmānuja himself worshipped it for three days, followed ›y samprokṣaṇam and recited Oru Nāyagam Tiruvāimoli and ;ubsequently the Yati Rāja maṭh was established.

Another temple where Biṭṭi Deva Rāya established worship ›f Ādi Keśava Perumal was at Belūr. According to the reference, /aisnu Rahaga Harita Samhita Velāpuri Souranga Keśava Aahātmya, this idol is supposed to have been worshipped by ndradyumna. In the beginning of Kali, the idol got submerged n sand. That place was somewhere near the present :hikmagalūr. The consort of Sri Viṣṇu Vardhana, Sāntalā Devi, vith the help of Biṭṭi Deva Rāya, brought it upto Belūr, where t got stuck in the ground. Rāmānuja, then stayed there for a nonth, had the idol restored and laid down the code of worship. t is interesting to note that on the car festival day, harijans were ;iven tīrtha and prasāda from the sanctum sanctorum and the :ar was drawn by them, which practice is followed in Melkote ılso. This is probably in recognition of the services rendered by Iarijans during Rāmānuja's sojourn there.

Sri Bhāṣyakāra Panprogita Pankajākṣha Sri Rāmamiśra Pāda 'adma Bhasmāsurāgra Kamaneya Vaḍusvarupa Vālapureīśa Bhagavam 'eya Suprabhatam. This is an extract from the local suprabhātam o vouchsafe for the fact that Rāmānuja laid down the instructions or worship there.

The third temple is at Tonḍanūr. This is where Biṭṭi Deva Rāya embraced Vaiṣṇavism. The Lord is known as Nambi 'ambirān or Sri Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa. Besides arranging for worship, he great temple was got constructed by Rāmānuja. The fourth emple is near Maddūr. This is one of the Pançalinga kṣetras. 'rom an inscription, we know that king Viṣṇu Vardhana had 'rected a temple for Kīrti Nārāyaṇa Perumāl in 1117 A.D. in ommemoration of his victory over the Çolas in the battle of 'alakād. This temple reflects Hoysāla influence. The fifth Temple ; at Gadag. According to the advice of Rāmānuja, Vīra Nārāyaṇa

was installed by Viṣṇu Vardhana and the king became Rāmānuja dāsa in every sense.

An interesting fact may be noted here : Viṣṇu worship was largely prevalent in Karnataka prior to the period of Rāmānuja. But the concept of Viṣṇu as viewed in Viśiṣṭādvaita was introduced there by Rāmānuja. This includes rituals of worship and services offered in temples, which Rāmānuja enunciated and codified in his Niyamanappaḍi. The most important of which is the recital of Tiruvāimoli and the works of other ālvārs.

The Toṇṇūr[50] inscriptions, according to B.R. Gopal, in general, throw light on the activities of the disciples of Rāmānuja for propagating his faith. These included building of temples, starting of new services and regularising other rituals . This was a sort of discipline which injected fresh vigour with the concept of Prapatti and Bhakti.

In this connection, a statement found on a copper-plate (grant 19 of Kṛṣṇaraja Wodeyār II, of Mysore) preserved in the Krsna Temple at Toṇṇūr may be mentioned. It registers the strong tradition of Sri Rāmānuja's stay at Yādavapura alias Toṇḍanūr. The record says that after personal enquiry, the king found that within his own kingdom of Karnataka the best and most suitable place for the residence of Sri Vaiṣṇavas was Yādavapura. The relevant verses from the record are worth quoting;.

Svakiyya Karnātaka-rājya-madhye viçarya
puṇyān sukhadān subhojyān/
desān-apaśyat svayameva rājā teṣ-uttamam
vaiṣṇavavāsa- yogam//
sa deso Yādavagirerd-dakshinetv-arddha-yojane/
Kaveryas-ç-ottare bhāge Nilādrer pasçim-ottare//
Rāmānujānghri-śrī-tīrtha-tatākadres-tu-pūrvatāh/
upatya kāyam puṇyāyam Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ-āṣrayāh//
Ramyo Hoysola Deschhy as sarva Kala Sukhaprada/
tatrastha Yādavapuri Viṣṇuvardhana-palita//
Sri Rāmānuja-pād-ābja-paragaih pāvanīkṛita/
Lakṣmīnārāyaṇah Sriman devosyam bhaktavatsalāh//
tasya sri devagehasya pūrvvasyam disi sobhanam/
sri yādavanārāyaṇa-Vasantagopāladeva-vara-bhavanam//

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50. B.R. Gopal - Sri Rāmānuja.

Some interesting points may be noted here. Yadavapura, ruled by Viṣṇuvardhana, is described as having become sanctified by Sri Rāmānuja's presence. This could be considered as epigraphical evidence,though very late, confirming the traditional account of Sri Rāmānuja's visit to Toṇṇūr. By this time, Melkoṭe was already a Śrīvaiṣṇava stronghold, but the record refers to Yādavagiri, i.e., Melkote, only while fixing the location of Yādavapura. Secondly, the record refers more prominently to the temple of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa, described as the deity of the place who is kind to devotees and bestows happiness upon them. Thereafter, the beautiful abode (temple) of Yādavanārāyaṇa Vasantagopāla is mentioned. Around these two temples, two agrahāras were established by the king.

There is another inscription which can be quoted to vouchsafe for the fact that Sri Rāmānuja reigned supreme as the Vaiṣṇava pontiff even after his time.

Record on the western wall of enclosure of the same temple:

May it be auspicious. Obeisance to the illustrious Rāmānuja. While the illustrious Mahārajādhirāja, Rājaparameśvara, lord of the east, south and western oceans, the illustrious Virapratāpa Sadāśivadevamahārāya was ruling the empire on earth, on the second day of the bright fortnight of Çitrā, in the current year Pramodūta, of the Śālivāhana Śaka year 1492, the fifty two (Ayivattibbar) Ayyās, first disciples of Rāmānujacarya, worshipper of the celebrated lotus feet of God Ṣampatkumāra Nārāyaṇa of Tirunārāyaṇapura, which is Yādavagiri, the illustrious abode of the eternal God, a Vaikuṇṭha on earth an increasingly holy place, a pavilion of knowledge, otherwise called the southern Badarikāṣrama, an uproar to the expounders of māyāvāda, a terror to conjurers, an adamantine cage to the refugees, establisher of the six recognised systems of philosophy, a Garuḍa having no discomfiture, establisher of the Vedic religion, granted the stone charter to Rāyapā-nāyaka, son of Koṇdama-nāyaka, punisher of the army of elephants, Rāyagovāla, founder of the Kakiva kingdom, a 'sultan among Hindu rulers, velugodacitra, as follows:

Previously, your ancestor Reça... Vasantarāya had granted to God Çelapillarāya of Melukoṭe, the villages, Mailanahalli, a hamlet of Melukoṭe, and purada-grama and its hamlet, which he had purchased from the treasury (of the temple), the income of cash and grains which was to be utilised as follows : half of it for feeding in Rāmānujakuta

after offering to the God and out of the other half deducting 3/4 for the perpetual lamp, the remaining 1/4 was yajamanamsa (the share of the head of household) which belonged to Anantayya, the agent (dharmakarta) appointed by your (ancestor) Vasantaraya. He was also enjoying two kha of wet land below the tank of Bharatapura. While this was so, owing to invasion of natural calamity (rajika-daivika) only the bidutaka (services ?) was being continued. Hence, you having ordered, through Jalela Rangapitrajaiyya, that the old practice should be continued, the old practice that we (now) maintain is as follows:

> *From the income of cash and grains from that village for ..... after the offering to god .... after deducting 3/4 of the income of the sthana (sthana-prapti) for perpetual lamp, the remaining 1/4 will be paid to Alvaru Singayya, your agent, grandson of Anantayya whom Vasantaraya had appointed, in succession of sons and grandsons, for as long as moon and sun endure ...... and also we maintain (grant of) two kha of wet land below the tank of Vasantapura to him. Thus is granted the stone charter, on our own accord. All the wet and dry lands, gardens, vegetable gardens, threshing -- (floor, house, farmers, dams, arable lands) . ...eight rights and powers of enjoyment including treasure on the surface or underground, water springs, minerals, imperishables, features ...... ready income and possibilities will be maintained to Alvara Singayya.*

If any one fails to maintain we shall set right. Whoever violates this charity is one who violates the feet of Rāmānujacarya. Rāmānuja, the senabova of the treasury, wrote. Signature of the fifty two Ayyas. Sri Nārāyaṇa; Sri Nārāyaṇa; Sri Nārāyaṇa; Sri Nārāyaṇa; Sri Nārāyaṇa.

There are two epigraphs of thirteenth to sixteenth century, dated 1299 A.D.. They record a grant of money by an individual for a Nandāvilakku (perpetual lamp), which goes to show that Melkote had become a Sri Vaiṣṇava centre through the influence of Rāmānuja. According to Sri B.R. Gopal, there is evidence available at Śāligrām for a shrine for Rāmānuja, a large structure with the foot prints of Rāmānuja. In front of the temple is Sripādatīrthakola -- a pond where Rāmānuja's feet were washed. On the right a sanyasi figure of Vaduga a Nambi, who embraced Vaiṣṇavism, can be seen.

On the beam of the doorway to this pond is a damaged epigraph of twelfth century – stating Embaar, and Açhān of Śrīrangam granted some privileges to the Vaiṣṇavas of Śāligrāma. These names are Dāśarathi, Govinda, Ananthālvān and Kandāḍai

Āççan. This record provides indirect evidence of Rāmānuja's visit. The inscription (1) starts with an invocatory verse in Rāmānuja's praise, which says that Embār Āndān, Āçārya of Śrīrangam, granted some privileges to the Vaiṣṇavas of Śāligrāma.

While Rāmānuja stayed in Toṇḍanūr Viṣṇu Vardhana was attracted towards him. He offered himself as his disciple with the help of whom it was easy for Rāmānuja to administer the distribution of responsibility among the local people there. There were different thoughts which were sometimes complimentary and at other times contradictory, prevalent at that time. Ramānaujā conducted the disputation in a spirit of friendly co-operation and made the opponents realise the untenability of narrow points of view. Dhati Pañçaka, a work of his immediate disciple's name is quoted - *Rāmānuja silenced the schools of çarvaka, Bauddha, Jaina, Mayavada and Saivites.He is the upholder of the thought of supreme synthesis, "the Lord of Śrīrangam".*

This system must have appealed to the king, who had a tough time with the Jainas and Buddhists during the time prior to Rāmānuja. Meanwhile Viṣṇuvardhana built a fort around the temple of Melkoṭe. After installation of the deity, Rāmānuja named the town as Tirunārāyaṇapuram. The word 'Melkoṭe' means the fort in the west to distinguish it from Śrīrangam (the eastern fort).

Melkoṭe carried with it a religious sentiment and a link with Śrīrangam fort, revolving around the link between gnāna and ānanda. Of the four major Vaiṣṇava temples, Melkoṭe was considered as Janarımantap and Śrīrangam as Bhoga Manṭapa. The four Vaiṣṇava strong holds are remembered in order during the religious rituals observed everyday at the sañdhya, the obligatory daily duty enjoined on a brāhmin.

I prostrate before the auspicious gem of Śrīrangam, the dark cloud at the crest of Venkaṭādri, the intensely bright celestial flower of Hastisaila and the light on the Yadu mountain.

The same idea is reflected in the Tiruvāimoli. The possessor of auspicious qualities, the spring of comparison, the supreme Lord and the bright person. Here again it seems Rāmānuja donned the robes of sanyāsin, at the shrine of Dattātreya. During his twelve years stay he is reported to have gone to Delhi and brought back the idol of Sampat Kumāra. Taught his classical work to Somayāji Āndān, during these days. It appears that people from various parts made their rich offerings to maintain

:he institution of Rāmānujakūṭa. Later inscriptions throw more ight on this fact.

This period of Ācārya's stay has left a deep impression on :he people. A number of literary works dealing with Rāmānuja's ife speak about his sojourn, though they wind around them a ;ood deal of myths and legends. But some existing inscriptions contemporaneous) are dependable sources for this information. 'or instance, the Śravaṇabelgola inscription of Bukkharāya refers o the conflicts between the Jainas and Sri Vaiṣṇavas and the ıward given by the king.

During his stay for twelve years during which time, he :onverted the Jaina king to the Hindu fold and installed the :irunārāyana Perumāl at Melkoṭe. Sri Vaiṣṇavism during this ›eriod spread far and wide in Mysore region.

In this context, we must examine some of the facts which ;o to show that Vaiṣṇavisation and Tamilisation of this territory .pparently began with the çola conquest, in the closing years of he tenth century. The Tamil migrations are identified as being rom Kāveri-Uttaramerur and Śrīrangam. Those who migrated rom Kāveri guided themselves along the Pālār and reached thẹ ›resent Kolār and Bangalore district. Those from Srirangam ıegotiated their way against the currents of Kāveri and reached ⁄Iysore and Maṇḍya districts. This migration took place some ime before Rāmānuja entered the Hoysāla country. One notable /aiṣṇava settlement, the name Viṇṇagar (temple of Viṣṇu) is ;iven a prominent place, as the temple of Śiva, and their ransactions were conducted in Tamil.

An intensive movement would not have taken off without he initiative of Tamil sections of the people. The Çola kings night also have identified themselves with them. Even ›rosperous Tamil merchants might have played a great role in 'stablishing these settlements and undertaking excavation of anks and pools, and also contributing. They brought with them ıot only Sri Vaiṣṇavism, but also their language and culture.

This migration had started quite sometime before Rāmānuja ,nd began in centres traditionally associated with the ālvars and Ācāryas.

King Viṣṇuvardhana having embraced Vaiṣṇavism got :onstructed Pañçanārāyaṇa temples and transferred to them all he land grants formerly given to the Jain bastis.

After a stay at Toṇḍanūr, expanding the doctrine of Viśiṣṭādvaita, Rāmānuja probably ran short of the sacred mud and by the God's command went to Melkote and as seen in the previous pages, installed the deity and built a new township. The temple was constructed and a series of festivals were instituted. In later years, this township even got the name of Yatiśaila, since it was restored by the Yati Rāmānuja.

He even established the Yatiraja Maṭha for a sanyāsi to live and manage the affairs of the temple. Yet another incident connected with Rāmānuja in Melkoṭe is the privilege of entry into the temple upto certain limits to low caste Hindus described as pançamas who were of immense help to Rāmānuja . They were called by the name Tirukkulattar. He opened the doors of religious instructions as well as certain modes of ritual and other privileges peculiar to Sri Vaiṣṇavas such as the Pañçasanskāra etc. to these people.

Although there are no direct evidence to corroborate the traditional account of Rāmānuja's sojourn in Karnataka, indirect evidence throws light on his association with Mithila and Śāligrāma identified as Mirle and Śāligrāma (Kṛṣṇa Rāja Sāgar Taluk). There are Yoga Narasimha temples here also.

More solid evidence is available at Śāligrāma, where a temple was built for Sri Rāmānuja, a large structure with several small shrines within a stone prākāra, the worship being done to the foot-prints of Rāmānuja and even a figure of Vaḍuganaṁbi was found there.

A damaged epigraph of twelve century (No. I, Part II) states that Eṁbār, Ālvāṇ, Āççan of Śrīrangam Maṭha granted some privileges to the Sri Vaiṣṇavas of Śāligrāma. These must have been the disciples of Rāmānuja belonging to the Maṭha at Śrīrangam. Though we find that Viṣṇu worhip was prevalent long before Rāmānuja the concept of Viṣṇu as found in Viśiṣṭādvaita was introduced by Sri Rāmānuja in Karnataka. This includes rituals and services offered in temples through his Niyamanappaḍi (rules laid down) as well as the recital of Tiruvāimoli.

The Toṇṇur inscriptions throw light on the activities of Rāmānuja and his disciples for propagating Śrīvaiṣṇavism with Bhakti and Prapatti as the bases.

The following inscriptions are worth noting :-

TOṆṆŪRU

"On the basement of the Kṛṣna temple"

Above

1. *Sri svasti samasta-prasasti-sahitam sriman-mahā-manḍaleśvaram tribhuvanamalla Talakāḍu-Komgu-Namguli-Gamga-vāḍi- Nonambavāḍi-Vuchchamgi-Banavāsi-Hānumgallu-gomḍa bhujabala-vīragamga Jagadekamalla sri Narasimha-Hoysāla- devaru srimad-rājadhani Dorasamudradalu sukha-samkathā- vinodadīm pruthivī-rājyam geyvuttiralu Śaka-varṣa sāvi- rada-embhattaneya Īśvara-samvatsarada (Āśvayuja) bahula aṣṭami Śukravāra Tola .... sarvādhikāri senāpati Kārikuḍi Tili Kuṭṭāḍi-damḍanāyka .... Yādavanārāyaṇa -caturvedi-mamgalada madhyadalu Kārikuḍi Tillekūtta viṇṇagharam mādisi sri Lakumi sri Bhūmi sahitavagi Vitti- rumda-perumala tiru-pratishṭheyam mādisi a devarige ā-chamdra-tārarkam saluvamtāgi ... namallim dhārāpūrvvam (vam) m-mādi koṭṭu biṭṭa datti hosa-vrittiya paduvana Beṭṭahalli ī-nāḍa Bāchihali Nagarūra Girimanamahalli Gummanahalli eraḍu-Simdhagaṭṭa muḍana Beṭṭahalli Ereya-kere Huliyakere Darasi (Kuppe) Ni-tima-magala Belakere Bamdihole Koratiyakere Kum(da) ... danahālu Selehālu Hālugoravi Huluguni Baḍabaṭṭe-yakere (Si)-lanare Kemtana- halli Eraḍimgunasā(ru) Bebevūra Sarahalli Mākabbehalli Māṇikanahalli imtī mūvattūra prabhu-gavuḍagalu vokkala-gūdiddu Kārikudit Tillekūttā-vinnamgā-rimgāgi Kūttāḍi- damḍanāykara kayyalu.*

2. *honumam sale komḍu paduvaṇa Beṭṭahalliya pūrvasīmā-sahitavāgi Vitirumda-perumāludevarige sale mārakoṭṭa Mayahaliya terige gāri Kārikuḍi Tile Kūttāḍi-damḍanḍy- kara kaiyyalu (salu) vamtāgi yi mūvatūra prabhu-gavum- ḍagalu vokalu-kūḍi koṭṭevu īśāmnya-sīmāmtarastha paḍu- vana Beṭṭahalliya ... mdi hiriyar-areya volaga (vu) ... yyalu (hom) nu ... . sīmā-sahitavāgi .... perumālu .... Kūttāḍi-damḍanāykara kaiyalu yinuru homnuman sale Komḍu Yiyinnra gadyānahomnumagāgi*

Below

3. *..... māḍida kshalava eyduvaru inti maryādeya tappi- davaru Gamgā-tīradali sāsira kavileyuvam sāsira brāhma (ha) ruvam komda pāpavan eyduvaru sāmānyoyam dharma- setūr-nripāṇām kāle kāle pālaīiyo bhavadhih// sarvān- etān-bhāvinah*

pārttivemdrān bhūyobhūyo yāchate Rāmachandrāh// sva-dattāmpara

4. .... *sundharām shashṭīr-vvarisha-sahasrāṇi viṣ-ṭhāyām jāyate krimih // Kārikuḍi-tTille-kkūttānḍi-daṇḍa -nāyakkaru Vittirunda- perumālimgāgi sri Yadava-nārāyaṇa-chaturvvedimam-galadalu komṇḍu biṭṭa bhūmi Keśava-Dīkshitara Kaiyyalu embattu gadyāṇa honna kottu mārukonda hiriya -banam ondukkam-ā brāhmaṇara kai*

5. ...... *kkoṭṭu mārukoṇḍu vritti nalkukkamāra-brāhmaṇaru dānam māḍida vritti nālkuvare ī vūra aśesha-mahasabheyu kūḍirddu koṭṭa vritti eraḍuvare ī-sabhe Vittirunda-perumālattiru-pratishṭheyam (māḍi) dhārāpūrvvakam māḍi koṭṭa temgaṇa māvina-banam (vom) mbhainūra-ippatta-eṇṭu sākshi Madūra sabhe Tailūra sabhe mangala-mahā-śrīh //*

This record engraved in the basement of the temple is important in as much as it relates to the construction of the Krsna temple and the consecration of the deities therein. It refers to the rule of Hoysāla Narasimha (I) ruling from his capital at Dvārsamudra. His sarvādhikari and senāpati Kuttaṇḍi-danḍanāyaka of Kārikuḍi got a temple (obviously named after himself) as Kārikuḍi Tillaikkuṭṭa-viṇṇagara (Kuttaṇḍi-Viṣṇugṛha) in the middle of Yādavanārāyaṇa- caturvedimangalam and consecrated therein the deity Viṭrirunda-Perumāl along with the Goddesses Sri Lakṣmī and Sri Bhūmi. The prabhugavuḍas of the thirty villages having received two hundred hons from Kuttaṇḍi-danḍanāyaka, sold land in Paduvana Beṭṭahalli for that God. Similarly that daṇḍanayāka also purchased a garden (hiriyahana) at Yādavanārāyaṇa-caturvedimangalam from Keśava-Dikṣitar for eighty gadyanas, besides which the vrittis received from the brāhmanas and the mahāsabha of that place and also a mango-grove containing nine hundred and twenty eight mango trees was donated to the god. The members of the sabhas at Maddūr and Tailūr are cited as witnesses. The record is dated Śaka 1080, Iśara, (Aśvāyuja) ba.8, Friday, corresponding to 1157 A.D. September 27. But the Śaka year should be 1079 .

TOṆṆŪRU No.2

"On the basement of the shrine of Krsna temple."

Be it well. While endowed with all the titles, the illustrious mahamandalesvara, tribhuvanamalla, conqueror of Talakadu, Kongu, Nangali, Gangavadi, Nonambavadi, Vuchhangi, Banavasi and Hanungallu, Bhujabalaviragangajagadekamalla Narsimha

loysaladeva was ruling the kingdom on earth, from the lustrious capital of Dvarasamudra, in peace, wisdom and appiness, on Friday, the eighth day of the dark fortnight of ısvayuja, in the year Isvara, of the Saka year 1030, Tula .... chief fficer, commander of the army, Tilla Kuttadi-dandanayaka of :arikudi .... having got constructed the temple of Karikudi 'illekutta Vinnaghara at the centre of 'adavanarayana-caturvedimangala, consecrated God 'ittirunda-perumal along with the Goddesses the illustrious akshmi and Sri Bhumi granted to the god, to last for as long as ıoon, stars and sun endure, with the pouring of libation water, ıe village Bettahalli to the west of the new vritti. Bachihalli, lagaruru, Girimana-mahalli, Gummanahalli, two Sindaghattas, ludana Bettahalli Erayakere, Huliyakere, Darasikuppe, litimangala, Belakere, Bandihole, Koratiyakere, Kunda danahalu, elehalu, Halugoravi, Huluguni, Badabatteyakere, Silanare, :entanahalli, Eradingunasaru, Behavur Sarahalli, Makabbehalli, lanikanahalli-the prabhugavudus and the farmers of these thirty illages of this nad having received gold (hon) from :uttandi-dandanayaka sold for the temple of Karikudi 'illekutta-vinnangar the income from taxes of Mayahalli, besides 'aduvana Bettahalli with its old boundaries so that its income ıay be paid to Karikudi Tilekuttandi-dandanayaka on behalf of od Vitirundaperumal. Thus was granted by the prabhugavundus nd the farmers of the thirty villages, Paduvana Bettahalli, ituated at the north-eastern boundary .... the big rock .... gold ... with the boundary .... God..... having received two hundred onnus from Kuttandidandanayaka, gave in exchange of this wo hundred honnus .... attan the sin of doing. ... He who iolates this agreement (maryada) will attain the sin of killing ıousand tawny cows and thousand brahmanas on the bank of ıe Ganga. "This bridge of dharma is common to all kings and hould be protected by you from time to time". Thus does :amachandra beseech again and again all future rulers - He who eizes the land given away by himself or by others will be born s a worm in ordure for sixty thousand years.

The lands granted after purchase by Kuttandi-dandanayaka f Karikudi for god Vittirunda-perumal and the big garden in 'adavanarayana-caturvedimangala got purchased from :esavadiksita by paying eighty gadyanas of gold, four vrittis got urchased from these brahmanas for .... four and a half vrittis ifted by the brahmanas of this ur, two and a half vrittis gifted

y all the members of this assembly of this and the mango grove f nine hundred and twenty eight trees to the south, granted by his assembly (sabhe) with pouring of libation water, at the time f consecrating God Vittirunda-perumal. The assembly of Maddur nd the assembly of Tailur are the witnesses. Good fortune.

ĀLIGRĀMA

"On a beam of the doorway of the Śrīpādatīrtha pond pposite the Rāmānujāçārya temple."

1. Rāmānujaya namah ..... triyagasan-ambhoruhasraya jagammala manojayam stam-anujam ....
2. Sri Sri Sri Saligaveya srivaisnavarimge Srirangada matadali Embarum Alanum Achanum Sri pratapa....
3. ... ru ... vana ..... hada .... geysinalemdu tama Tirumala amurimge baralu navya prasada vara ....

This broken and worn out inscription is in characters of circa welfth century. It seems to confer some privileges upon the rivaisnavas of Saligava (Saligrama) by Embar, Alan and Achchan f the matha at Sriranga. The latter is obviously identical with he matha at Srirangam, one of the foremost Srivaisnava centres f Tamilnadu. Embar, Alan and Achchan of the record may be dentified respectively with Govinda. Anandalvan (Anantasuri of Girangur) and Kadambi Achchan.

ĀLIGRĀMA - No. 1

"On the beam of the doorway to the Sripadatirtha pond in ront of the Rāmānujacarya temple."

Obeisance to Rāmānuja .... The pair of the lotus feet, an bode of the universe, the victory of the pure mind .... that ounger brother. Be it well. To the Srivaisnavas of the illustrious aligave, Embar, Alan and Achan of the matha at Sriranga and he illustrious pratapa .... (granted) for conducting their festival tirunal ?) having come to that place(avuru ?) .... the offered food ....

In proof of this, according to Dr. Gopal , we find that out f a total of sixty seven records from Tondannur, forty one are n Tamil. The Sri Vaisnava tradition, which associates Rāmānuja vith Tondanur, is partly supported by historical records[51]. The Guruparamparā prabhavam, Rāmānuja Divya Caritram and

1. Gopinath Rao,J.A.Subramanya Ayyar.

several Tengalai and Vadagalai traditions state that Rāmānuja camped at Tondanur in 1100 A.D., converted Viṣṇuvardhana Hoysala, with his patronage got a beautiful lake constructed. According to Dr. Settar[52], the tank irrigated extensive garden lands, coconut and mango groves; yadavapuri was protected by Viṣṇuvardhana and sanctified by the pollen, the dust, from the lotus feet of Rāmānuja.[53] Establishment of Rāmānuja matha by Tamil Mahajans adds support to the association of Rāmānuja with Tondanur.

Traditional accounts maintain that from Tondanur Rāmānuja moved to Melkote for he was in need of white clay for the Pundra on the forehead; it appears Sri Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Melkote, commanded him to move to Melkote, where he went and even discovered the image of Sri Tirunarayana. On the very face, of it this could not be a great inducement to Sri Rāmānuja. But legends confirm this source of information and so is accepted by the people even by the beginning of fourteenth century, according to B.R. Gopal.

An inscription dated 1319 A.D. states; that there was a belief that Rāmānuja had discovered this tirumaṇ at Melkoṭe. More than this reason, the king must have prevailed upon Rāmānuja to move to Melkoṭe to participate in the consecration of the temple there. At that time, Viṣṇuvardhana had even crossed the Tungabhadra and was ruling over the Çālukya territories, which probably made Rāmānuja think about the opportunity to propagate his faith. The later Ācārya Vedānta Deśika describes Melkoṭe as the āçārya's vijayasthāna where a stone was set up to the North West of the Garuḍa shrine in the Namadakaṭṭe garden, which reads this. On Monday, the first day of the bright fortnight of Āṣāḍa in the year Siddhārtha, Immaḍi Ravuttarāya Māḍappa Daṇḍanāyakha, son of Ravuttarāya Perumāladeva ḍaṇanāyaka of Hedetale, made over the title of land noticed by Emberumānār as tirumaṇ (holy earth) to God Tirunārāyaṇa Perumāl as a good fortune. Probably he meant the victory of propagation of the Śrīvaiṣṇava faith.

Another inscription also speaks of the Rāmānuja's visit and stay at Melkoṭe. This is a record on the prākāra wall of the Nārāyaṇaswāmi temple dated 1544 A.D.[54], in which there is a reference to Yatirāja maṭha - When Bhāṣyakāra once stayed (Sri

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52. ibid.
53. EC VI,p.122 issued during the period of Hoysāla Narasiṁha
54. Inscription no.42 of B.R.Gopal's Rāmānuja in Karnataka.

}hāṣyakāra Bijayamādi Idda Etirāja-Maṭha) Rāmānuja is referred o as Yatirāja. On the basis of this epigraph, this must have been he place where Rāmānuja stayed and a maṭha was built at a ater date. By about 1256 a shrine for Rāmānuja had been built ınd for a Rāmānujakūṭa a choultry for feeding people, a grant ɔf two villages was made by Ketiyappaśaṭṭi.[55]

It is also to be noted that before Rāmānuja left Melkoṭe, he ;ot made an image of his own and installed in the temple. The ıbove inscription also indicates that already by 1256, the shrine vas in existence either at that time or after Rāmānuja left Melkoṭe. ;ome traditional accounts say that there were 45 people following ıim to Mysore. The traditional date of Rāmānuja's reaching [oṇṇūr is 1099 A.D. in Kali 4200, 1021 A.D. Bahudānya, Śukla ;uruvāram, Çaturdaśi, the idol of Viṣṇu was founded by {āmānuja.[56] With the blessings of āçārya, Viṣṇu Vardhana ·xpanded his kingdom; he and his consort were instrumental in ɔuilding four more Tirunārāyaṇa shrines apart from the one at Melkoṭe in this region. They are: (i) temple of Nambi Tambiran, [oṇṇūr (ii) Tirunārāyaṇa at Melkoṭe (iii) Kīrti Nārāyaṇa at [alakāḍu (iv) Vijaya Nārāyaṇa at Belūr (v) Vīra Nārāyaṇa at ;adag. Melkote, of course was the kingdom of Rāmānuja. He vas hailed as the āçārya and the guardian of the temple. To ·nable the common people not to forget in life the divine ·lement,. Rāmānuja emphasised the importance of temple vorship, by following the system of Pāñcarātra sponsored by /iṣṇu. Rāmānuja did not introduce this system in any temple on ıis own initiative but kept both the systems namely Vaikhānasa ınd Pāñcarātra working on equal footing. He allowed the /aikhanasas to continue. The Vaikhānasa system relates to an ıspirant after Mokṣa, where as Pāñcarātra lays stress on the ervice aspect in life to attain salvation.

During the consecration of Tirunārāyaṇa at Melkoṭe, {āmānuja adopted the Īśvara Samhita, which is referred to by (āmunaçārya[57] in his Āgamaprāmaṇya and Vedānta Deśika in ıis Pāñcarātra Rakṣā.[58] This samhita was preached by Nārada to he ṛsis. It is comprised of 8200 ślokas. The twentieth chapter of his samhita is known as "Svayam Vyaktādi Bhedam Yādavāçala Mahātmīyāni" (Page 329). There is a view that this particular

5. Inscription no.23 of B.R.Gopal's Rāmānuja in Karnataka.
5. Yāmuna - Agamaprāmāṇyam
7. Śrī Pāñcarātra Rakṣāsāram,Ubhaya Vedānta Granthamāla
3. Kalyana Rama Iyengar,ibid.

portion may be an interpolation at a later date. The 175th sloka in the eighth chapter of this samhita speaks of Nammālvār also.

Since Yādavāçala is mentioned in the samhita, Īśvara samhita was followed in the Melkoṭe in temple rituals by Rāmānuja.This is only a view.

When the Lord was installed, he was given a holy bath and worship according to the Pāñcarātra Āgama.[59] Rāmānuja attended the consecration for three days all by himself and *Oru Nāyagan*, a verse from the Ṭiruvāimoli was recited and probably a Yatirāja Maṭha was established. A new township now grew up on the hill with streets and rows of houses. The prākaras and the township stand proof to Rāmānuja's acumen in town planning and engineering. Series of festivals, daily, monthly and annual were instituted.

Yet, there was a need for the processional image. The Lord appeared in his vision and informed him that the image known as Rāmapriya was in Delhi with the Turkish Sultan. Rāmānuja journeyed to Delhi and found the image among other toys of the princess. As soon as Rāmānuja called him, it appears that the image jumped down from the couch and came over to the lap of Rāmānuja. He named him Śelvapillai - (Sampatkumāra in Sanskrit). The princess could not stand the separation from her Lord. She followed him to Melkoṭe where Lord Sampatkumāra was installed. Melkoṭe in days of yore was known as Nārāyaṇādri, Vedādri and Yadavādri and in Kaliyuga is designated as Yatiśaila, since it was restored by the yati - ascetic Rāmānuja.[60]

In the year 1110 A.D., in his ninetieth year Rāmānuja wrote the Niyamanappaḍi, the temple charter for Melkoṭe, which, till date is carried out accordingly. The sthānikas were divided into four divisions and entrusted with the following portfolios.

1) Tiru Anantapuram Dāsan should perform the arçanā, during the annual festivals, Tāṁbula sevai and also the aftermath of the worship.
2) Tirumalaka sthānika to offer garlands for the deities.
3) Tirukkurunguḍi Dāsan to be in charge of dresses for nitya (daily) and special occasions.
4) Koil Naṁbi; for service at the shrine of Goddess Yadugiri.

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59. B.R.Gopal,ibid.
60. Kalyana Rama Iyengar.

5) Yatirāja Dāsan for fanning the Lord Ālavattam.

6) Sri Rangarāja Bhaṭṭar for arçanā.

When Niyamanappaḍi[61] was written and promulgated in he year 1110 A.D., Rāmānuja was ninety. During the time many /aiṣṇavas migrated from Tirukkurunguḍi, alongwith Tirukkurunguḍi Dāsan and the Arayar. The former was given the privilege of worship of Lord Sampatkumāra.

The true impact of Vaiṣṇavism was on temple rituals. The our thousand hymns of the ālvārs have been given the status of he Vedas in Tamilnadu and were accordingly recited on occasions. This practice was introduced in the Karnataka temples also. A number of donations were instituted for such services. n 1181 A.D., a certain Tirunaraiyur Dāsa, reciter of the Tiruvaimoli, made an endowment, for white washing a manṭapam of the Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa temple at Toṇṇūr.[62]

Rāmānuja lived in Melkoṭe for twelve years, evolving a form of social service he had in mind. He taught his classical work of Sri Bhāṣya to one Somayāji Āṇdān. People from various parts of he country made rich offerings to maintain the institution of Rāmānujakūṭta, which led to the development of temple wealth vith vast lands and ornaments.

Later the rulers of Mysore, right from Raja Wodeyār to Kṛṣṇaraja Wodeyār III evinced keen interest in the temple nstitution.

From the fourteenth century, Melkoṭe assumed greater prominence as a religious centre. Many rulers of the Vijayanagara lynasty were devotees of Viṣṇu and some of them appear to iave embraced Sri Vaiṣṇavism as a personal faith. It became a sacred place because of the association of the āçārya. Inscriptions also describe it as the glorious abode of the eternal Lord. Bhūloka Vaikuṇṭa, Vaikuṇṭa Vardhana Kṣetra, Jñāna Manṭapa, Parabidarna, Dakṣiṇa Badarikāśram are some of the terms by vhich Melkoṭe is described.

Rāmānuja is termed as Vedamārga Pratiṣṭhāpanāçārya establisher of the Vedic path), Māyāvādi Kolāhala (opponent to he expounder of Advaita), Saraṇāgata Vajrapañjara (an adamantine cage for refugees). These epithets, according to B.R.

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1. B.R.Gopal,ibid,p.21.
2. Epigraphica Indica IV,pages 1-88.

Gopal, are found in the British museum plate of Sadaśiva Rāya dated 1556 A.D.,[63] which registers a grant for offerings to the image of the ācārya. Consecrated at Śrīperumbudur, his birthplace, it appears, Rāmānuja himself, left a metallic figure which had a special significance for his followers during his absence.

Besides temple administration, we have other types of services also. One is to raise flower gardens and get grants for their maintenance. Establishment of the Yatirāja and Ahobila Maṭhas was yet another way. The pontiffs of these Maṭhas, by their scholarship, devotion and such other qualities attracted devotees and also received royal patronage.

Within a century of Rāmānuja's sojourn in Karnataka, he came to be deified like the ālvārs. For worship, in these shrines, grand grants were received. This was a common feature in almost all the Viṣṇu temples during the Vijayanagar period. The chief annual festival was Tiruvadhyayana[64] which Rāmānuja held for twenty to twenty-five days with the recital of the Four thousand continuously. This was meant to keep the memory of ālvārs and thus elevate the soul of the devotee. Rāmānuja probably thought this was the best means of commemorating the ālvārs and their divine compositions.

In the same way, the Kauśika Purāṇa, the Varāha Purāṇa and Rāmānuja's Śrībhāṣya were also read. In due course, shrines for Rāmānuja, Nammālvār, Pillai Lokāçārya and Vedānta Deśika were also built, by which Sri Vaiṣṇavism and Viśiṣṭādvaita came to be popularised during the Vijayanagara period.

Rāmānuja was quite liberal in his outlook and he gave allowance of temple entry to the fifth varṇa on one day during the annual festival in recognition of their services, rendered during his sojourn. Rāmānuja gave them the name Tirukkulattār, or those of the family of the Lord.

Another interesting evidence of Rāmānuja's influence in the Karnataka region is given below-almost all the inscriptions at Toṇṇūr are in Tamil. With the Tamil migration, systems of worship were also carried. The impact of the Tamil language is

63. Record to the right of the new doorway at Tirunārāyana temple,Melkoṭe - Contrary - B.R.Gopal,p.146.
64. B.R.Gopal,ibid,p.38.

also stupendous. Though the Melkoṭe epigraphs' are Kannada, several Tamil terms as śurul Amudu - (Betel leaves), Amisai - (food offering), Tiruṇāl - festival. Arulappāḍu, song in praise of the mercy of God, had all infiltrated even during the Hoysāla period and were used in the Kannada language.[65]

The Melkoṭe temple itself was under the control of the fifty-two Vaiṣṇavas. Rāmānuja left behind many disciples to look after the temple services and also propagate Viśiṣṭādvaita. Records indicate these persons like mahājanas, who were very powerful custodians of the temple property, controlled the conduct of worship, maintenance of temple servants besides transacting business on behalf of the temple and supervising the management. The chief amongst these is referred to as Senabova - Rāmānuja, probably meaning the official agent of Rāmānuja.

Learned scholars were invited to settle down at Melkoṭe and houses were granted to them.

Under the inspiration of Rāmānuja, was formulated a sound administration in Melkoṭe. Through the efforts of sthāanikas and āçārya Puruṣas associated with the Melkoṭe temple, chieftains, nobles and even the commoners came forward with rich offerings of villages, lands, jewellery and pooled everything to maintain the temple. The sthānikas were all-in-all in the management.

The contributions were utilised in accordance with the rituals in the temple. Community feeding was rendered possible for the visiting devotees. Even in the absence of the sthānikas and āçārya Puruṣas, who went on spiritual and administrative missions, their right to the shrine was not denied. If only these bountiful gifts had been preserved intact over the centuries, Melkoṭe would have been one of the richest temples of India. But due to certain circumstances beyond administrative control, this could not be rendered possible.

Those who belonged to the fold of āçārya Puruṣas contributed their mite by cultivating a group of śiṣyas from all communities.[66] One Kesavāçārya Svāmi, celebrated for his connection with the Tiruvāimoli had a son named Śrīnivāsa. The boy, though young, under the inspiration of Lord Narasiṁha

65. G.Lakshmana - Impact of Rāmānuja's teaching on life and condition in society,p.213.
66. K.A.Nilakantha sastri - Studies in the history of the third dynasty of Vijayanagaram.

moved to Ahobilam in Andhra. He became an ascetic under the name of Ādivaṇṣaṭakopa Svāmi, the founder of the Ahobila Maṭha. Later Sri Kṛṣṇadevarāya of Vijayanagara, under the influence of one of these sages wrote the Āmukta Mālyada, the life history of Āndāl, the female ālvar and celebrated his guru, Ādivaṇṣaṭakopa. The king offered many gifts to the deity at Melkote.[67]

Such śiṣhyas united to create an institution of their āçāryas for purposes of arranging temple worship and feeding the devotees on special occasions. The sthānikas also enlisted people belonging to the lay-groups to make contributions for maintaining the temple along Rāmānuja's line of thinking.

After Rāmānuja, the scheme he had introduced was; with no doubt, followed with the best of intentions. Vast accumulations were made. But as time passed, the tradition slowly got discontinued. The temple administration came under the power of Mysore rulers. About the second half of the eighteenth century with the sectarian disputes in Tamilnadu and the litigation that followed, all the wealth was diverted towards this dispute. The Yatirāja Maṭha at Melkoṭe became a Tenkalai Maṭha, with subsects of Pūrvaśikha, the Kīlnattars[68] and the Mandyans representing the maṭha. A dispute arose between the Parakāla Matha at Mysore, and the Yatirāja Maṭha at Melkoṭe on matters like the Maṇḍayam entry and so on.

Four āçārya Puruṣas are recorded to have lived during the time of Rāmānuja who were known as Sthalāçārya Puruṣas. They directed the recital of the Four thousand. At the time of closing the morning worship, these people were privileged to receive the Paṇçamukh garland and three spoonfulls of tīrtha. On the spiritual basis, this custom has a great sanctity.

Rāmānuja was a great Āçārya Puruṣa who has left behind a legacy for the well-being of mankind. His life did contain material-worthy of attention in various walks of life.

This, in brief is both the traditional as well as the historical account of Rāmānuja's activities, in Karnataka in general and in Melkoṭe, in particular.

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67. N.Venkataramanayya and Lakshman - University of Madras,1946,p.321.
68. Koil Olugu,p.55; Rāmānuja Nūṭrandādi V.42; K.R.Iyengar - Uḍayavar Dikvijayappaḍalam,p.271.

Sri Rāmānuja's divyadeşa yātra was hailed by the Mūlabera t Śrīrangam to win over the Buddhist, Jain and Advaita onflicts[25]. Rāmānuja was commanded by Namperumal to weed ut the unwanted orders and to establish the Vaiṣṇava dharma. Ie left with his seventy four important disciples, covered such hrines as Kumbhakoṇam, Tirumālirunjolai, Sethu, Kurugur, iruvaṇparisaram, Tiravaṇantapuram and many of the shrines at erala, Mathura, Śālagrāmam, Dvāraka, Ayodhya, Badari, Iaimiśam, Puṣkara, Kashmir Saraswati Bhandara, Kāśi, Pūri, Sri ūrmam Simhāçalaṇ, Ahobilam, Tirupati, Kāṇçi, Tirunīrmalai, iruvallikkeni, Madhurāntakam, Tiruvahīndrapuram, Vīra Iārāyaṇapuram and got back to Śrīrangam.

Out of this, special mention must be made about Rāmānuja's ainstaking efforts to establish three of the above as Vaiṣṇava nrines : (1) Tirumalai, (2) Sri Kūrmam and (3) Gadag.

In Tirumālirunjolai, he made arrangements for sweet rice n behalf of Āṇḍāl so was known as Koil Aṇṇan and established few peeṭams of which he himself was the first jiyar. This is ne of the pīṭhāms of Simhāsanāṭhipati, installed by Rāmānuja. special arayar was instituted for the Sannidhi. Sri Senāpati yar was hailed as the next jiyar. Incidentally this is the place which gave refuge to Kurattālvān and later to Namperumāl, uring the Muslim conquest of Śrīrangam. In Ālvār Tirunagari, e got the divine sanction from Nammālvār. In Tirukkurunguḍi, e again established another maṭha, which proved in later years, s well as during the time of Rāmānuja a centre for helping 'aiṣṇavas live in peace with each other. Rāmānuja standardised ie basic principle with mutual understanding and co-operation nd got them inscribed in stone in the temples.

Traditional accounts[69] say that the Perumāl became a dāsa f Rāmānuja, by getting the mantra

sarvesameva mantraṇām - Mantra ratnam subhavahan, sakrit narana matrena, dadadi paramam padam, lakshmi narayanethi hitam irva phalapradam

and Rāmānuja gave him the name Sri Vaiṣṇava Nambi. This hows how the Lord Himself became the dāsa, the importance f Dāsatva in Sri Vaiṣṇavism is emphasised here.

In his north Indian vijaya, he met scholars of other seats, nd in Kashmir, explained at the behest of Goddess Sarasvati,

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). Guruparampara Prabhāvam,p.224.

the Kapyāsam concept as - the colour of Lotus - as against the commentary by Śankara. He was given the title of Bhāṣyakāra by the Goddess of learning.

His north Indian visit is referred in Prapannāmṛtam[70]. Though there is no historical evidence to this, we may confirm it with the fact that offshoots of Rāmānuja Sampradāya spread in northern india.

After establishing the Sri Kūrma shrine as Viṣṇu sthala, his next visit was to Simhāçalam where a legendary information is worth noting. One Anantakṛṣṇa through his exotic songs was worshipping Lord Narasimha who in turn emphasised the fact that He, the Lord Himself will not be able to confer mokṣa on His devotee - which privilege lies only with a great gem like Rāmānuja.

Rāmānuja's next visit was to Ahobilam, where the nine shrines of Lord Narasimha are situated.

Again, he went to Tirumalai, then to Madhurāntakam (where, while young he got his Paṇçasaṅskāra initiation from Mahāpūrṇa then to Kanci) and Vīra Nārāyaṇapuram to pay obeisance to the first Āçārya Nādamuni and got back to Madhurāntakam and to Śrīrangam.

KĀÑÇĪPURAM TEMPLE

The *Kāñçī Varadarāja* temple came into prominence and importance during a later date at the time of the āçāryas. The three temples in order of importance are Koil (Śrīrangam), Tirumalai (Tirupati) and Perumāl Koil (Kāñçī). The latter attained its eminent position due to its association with Rāmānuja's activities. Even the preceptor of Rāmānuja, Tirukaççinaṁbi and his immediate disciple Kurattālvān were devoted to this temple.

Śrī Rāmānuja's activity with this temple is in his formative years, Tiruvarangattamudanār in his appellation emphasises the point by calling Rāmānuja- *Ten attiyurar Kalalinaikkil punda Anbālār*[71], i.e. one who served at the feet of the Lord of Attiyur. True devotion to the Lord and not mere knowledge, was the core of greatness. On the advice of Tirukaççinambi, Rāmānuja undertook the kaiṅkarya of bringing water for the Lord's ablution.

Another important episode mentioned in the Vaiṣṇava hagiology is that Lord Varada chose Tirukaççinambi as his

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70. Anaṇtārya - Prapannāmṛta Darpaṇam.
71. Tiruvangattu Amudanār - Rāmānuja Nuṭrandādi.

medium to convey to Rāmānuja the six famous tenets of Viśiṣṭādvaita which served as a guideline for Rāmānuja's teachings and Naṁbi also asked Rāmānuja to seek guidance under Mahāpūrṇa at Śrīrangam.

Rāmānuja had special attachment to Kāñcī and Lord Varada, since he spent his early and formative years here. When difference in interpretations arose between Rāmānuja and his guru Yādavaprakāṣa, he chose to leave him and sought counsel from Tirukaççinambi, a Vaiśya who asked him to bring a jar full of water from the Sālai well, which is continued even today. This is the kaiṅkarya aspect which Rāmānuja later stressed in his preachings.

When Rāmānuja left Kāñcī for Śrīrangam, he sought lessons from Tiruvarangapperumāl Arayar, Tirumalai Āṇḍān Tirukkoṭṭoiyūr Naṁbi, Peria Naṁbi and others. With this legacy, Rāmānuja inherited the pontifical chair at Śrīrangam - which became the centre of his activities.

In comparison with the three temples of Śrīrangam, Tirupati and Melkoṭe which had a direct influence of Rāmānuja, Kāñcī no longer figured as prominently in his later life as before. But he visited Kāñcī to seek the blessings of Varada. His special devotion to the Lord of Kāñcīpuram can be illustrated from the Guruparamparā. When Kurattalvan's eyes were plucked by the Çola King, Rāmānuja exhorted him to do Prapatti to Lord Varada and thus Kurattālvān composed his famous Varadarajastavam, a laudatory poem which is being recited even to this day on important occasions. Rāmānuja had for his private worship (ārādhana) the idol of Lord Varadarāja which he cherished till his last days.

Rāmānuja's association with this temple in the formative years of his life and his frequent visits to the same gave importance to the temple. Many of his administrative reforms in the temple set up at Śrīrangam had their influence in Kāñcīpuram as well. In recognition of his services Rāmānuja was deified in the Varadarāja temple within fifty five years after his demise.

The Vaiṣṇavas claim great antiquity for the Pāñcarātra agamas, the bedrock of Temple worship and Rāmānuja who emphasised the devotional aspect (Bhakti) - propagated the need for a personal God with all attributes found the Pāñcarātra by introducing the Pārameśvara Samhita in Śrīrangam,* Jayākhya in

Kāñcī and Isvarā in Melkote[72]. The latter is rich in encyclopaediac range of interests and is followed in Kāñcī in connection with all forms of temple worship. The most famous festival,Brahmotsava is conducted here during the Tamil month of Vaikāsi for ten days. The third day festival of the Garuḍotsavam is of great awe and grandeur. This is mentioned by Deśika in his Varadarāja Pañçāśat. Two sacred songs by Śrī Tyāgarāja and Muthusvāmy Dīkṣitar particularly bring out the beauty of this festival.

The next important festival is the Adhyayana Utsavam which is the very soul of the Vaiṣṇava temple.The intimate relationship between God and his devotees is brilliantly brought out during the festival. At the end of the festival, the Lord accompanied by Rāmānuja's Vigraha goes to the Sālai well from where had Rāmānuja fetched water daily. There is a reference to this festival in an undated record of a Vijayanagara King according to K.V. Raman. Big crowds of people wait near the temple premises to have a glimpse of the Lord with the paraphernalia of the recitation of the Vedas , Prabandhams , the bhajans-making the grand march of the Lord spectacular. This is nothing but the influence of Rāmānuja's foresightedness in the participation of man in God's eternal glory.

From the Koil Olugu account, we have known how Rāmānuja employed Ṣāttādas in the temple service who were paid emoluments in kind and cash. Even Kāñcī had its share in this respect. This temple was also a centre of learning and education. Maṭhas were established for the purpose. The Jīyars of these Maṭhas held important position in the temple by virtue of their scholarliness. They were even honoured by successive kings of Mysore.

During the post Rāmānuja period, discourses were held in the temple premises on both the Śrībhāṣya and the Ālvār's hymns. During this time, the sectarian difference did not assume such great intensity. Vedānta Deśika's intimate connection with Kāñcī and his love for Lord Varada are evident in his works like the Varadarāja Pañçāśat,Vairāgya Pañçaka, Aḍaikalappattu which are a few of the many. Brahma Tañtra Swatantra, a native of Kāñcī, founded of the Parakāla maṭha. He figures in an epigraph at Varadarājasvāmi temple dated 1359.

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72. H.Daniel Smith ,translated into Tamil by K.K.A.Venkatacari- Panorama of Pāñçarātra literature,Hoe & Madras,1967.

Prativādi Bhayaṅkaram Aṇṇan of Kāñcī was one of the Aṣṭadiggajas of the Prabandha creed.

Maṇavāla Māmuni: His life constitutes another milestone in the history of Śrī Vaisnavism. His writings have made a great impression of Śrī Vaiṣṇava devotees. He learnt the Śrī Bhāṣya under Kiḍāmbi Nayanār. He composed the Devarāja Mangalam describing the benign qualities of Lord Varada. He has the privilege of a separate shrine and a ten day festival here. The Kāñcī temple was a centre of education, the maṭhas serving as seminaries and schools. A particular instance is the Brahmataṇtra maṭha which has gathered a good collection of manuscripts and books on Rāmānuja Darśana.

By the fifteenth century, thanks to Saluva Narasimha and Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Ayyan, a Rāmānuja Kūṭa was established.[73] His share of the food offerings from the temple was donated by Kandadai Ayyan to the Rāmānuja Kūṭa. The preceptors after Rāmānuja, carried on his work with the ascendancy of the Vijayanagara Kings, with the establishment of maṭhas. The Tenkalai school gained supremacy and popularised the Ālvār's festivals and received the Arulappāḍu rights. With the fall of the Vijayanagara power in 1645, due to the threat of Muslim invasion the idols were removed to a forest in Uḍayārpālayam and were brought back only after twenty-two years. The jīyar who assisted the reinstallation was appointed the manager of the temple after sometime. When the existing procedure was disturbed, there were clashes from the nineteenth century. The records show the ascendancy of the Prabandhic school even in matters of castemark and eventually the temple became a tenkalai one.

Thus we may conclude that the Varadarājasvāmi temple filled a large place in the socio-economic and religious life of the Vaiṣṇavas thanks to the benefactions of the Çola and Vijayanagara kings. It was an employment potential for numerous priests, hymnists, musicians, etc.. It gave patronage to the learned and held a pivotal role for the social and moral well being of the people. This is the sequel of the great work rendered by Rāmānuja in the spiritual field.

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73. K.V.Raman - Śrī Vāradarājasvāmi temple-Kañçī, p.78.

THE UTSAVA

The Vaiṣṇava Āgama, as we have seen, are divided into tv groups namely Pāñcarātra and Vaikhānasa. The Pāñcarātra syste adopts a new methodology regarding its rituals.

SIGNIFICANCE: It may not be out of place to discuss tl derivation of the word 'Utsava' here. According to the Pāñcarāt its derivation is as follows :

Sute iti savah : ut + savah = Utsavah.

Seva means the sorrow of the world. Utsava is the mea to drive it away. Mumukṣus can get rid of th samsāraduhkhāmbudhi by performing these festivals.[74]

CLASSIFICATION: In general, it is of three kinds. They a Nityotsava, Naimittikotsava and Kāmyotsava.

Nityotsava means the daily rituals which are perform usually from morning to night in all temples. There is differen of opinion in this context among the Samhitas. For instance, tl Pārameṣvara Samhita describes Nityotsva as that which performed once in a year.[75]

Naimittikotsava - Which is performed to acquire the thr puruṣārthas - dharma - artha - kāma.

THE MAHOTSAVA

Mahotsava is different from the aforesaid utsavas in that brings welfare to the entire state and pleases God. Unlike Vaikhānasa, it is called Brahmotsava. We should not adhere the strict difference between Pāñcarātra and Vaikhānasa in usi the two different words Mahotsava and Brahmotsava in the san context.

Śrī Praśnasamhita discloses the origin of Mahotsava clear - *utsute harsamiti tasmadesa mahotsavah.*[76] The Mahotsava is of eig types lasting for a month, a fortnight, twelve, nine days, a wee five, three days and even one day. These utsavas have ma purposes, of which liberation is the most important. The prasa dedicated to Garuḍa during the Dhvajārohaṇa removes four typ of Nandyadosha, childlessness, possession of only one child only female children and giving birth to unhealthy children.

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74. Padma Saṁhita - p.102.
75. Pārameśvara Saṁhita - p.182.
76. Śrī Praśnasaṁhita - p.288.

This Mahotsava is of two kinds - Dhvajārohaṇa pūrvaḥ and Ankurārpaṇapūrvaḥ. In the first, Dhvajārohaṇa is to be performed in the morning and then Bherītāḍana and Ankurārpaṇa in the night. This grants both the king as well as the prajās - welfare.[77]

The second starts with Bherītāḍana and next occur Dhvajārohaṇa and Ankurārpaṇa. It fetches heavens for the sādhaka.[78]

In the third variety utsava starts with the Ankurārpaṇa at night after that the Dhvajārohaṇa and Bherītāḍana will take place. It gives Mokṣa to all. Now-a-days only this kind of festival in observed in all temples. There are many sub-divisions among the utsavas described in Pāñcarātra samhitas.

Purpose: Each and every utsava has many purposes of which liberation is the cardinal. There is a convention that the prasāda which is dedicated to Garuḍa in the Dhvajārohaṇa will give children to the childless. There are many evidence about the validity of this saying in society. The offering to Garuḍa should be given to the woman after meditating on Garuḍa and Śrīhari, and she should eat three mouth-fulls.[79] The Pādmasaṁhita says that he who performs a mahotsava, liberates not only himself but the whole clan.

In the mahotsava, the car festival occupies the seventh position.

Car Festival - Whatever be the type of the mahotsava , the car festival should be on the seventh day. It has a singular importance in all of them, because he who sees or worships the Lord in the ratha will surely enjoy mokṣa. So people usually attend this festival, disregarding both inward and outward inconveniences. It is needless to say that the worship of the Lord in the car is more fruitful than anything else.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY : According to some āgamasaṁhitas and classical Sanskrit literature, we can say that these utsavas are a boon to society because many neglected arts of this country are then enriched. For example, plays are staged in all regions, a number of free dispensaries are run for poor and pilgrims etc.. Even now in many famous temples like Tirupati,

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77. Rājarājyasukhaprada,Pārameśvara Saṁhita,p.183.
78. Svargadhogopālaprada,ibid.
79. Padmasaṁhita - p.110.

this type of encouragement is given towards the neglected fields of music and other arts.

AVABHṚOTHOTSAVA : This Avabṛothotsava known also as Vasantotsava, has unique prominence in all Mahotsavas. Hence, many people participate in this who were not present during the other utsava days.

'Avabhṛotsava' means the concluding session of a sacrifice. Mahotsava is held to be a sacrifice and the last function is a bath, when people take a plunge in holy waters, the Tīrthabera idol and the Lord's discus (Çakra) are also given a plunge there. Such a bath is declared to wipe away all sins and secure the highest heaven.

THE FESTIVALS

The significance of festivals constitutes in a sense the eternal religion of India and they are the outward social expression of the communal joy of the people and have helped to retain the best in the past culture by the celebrations of the present handing it down to the future generation. Festivals are generally rigid and this rigidity helps us search into the past Moreover, the five elements get the major share of worship in these festivals. e.g., the rivers, trees, sun are paid homage. These things call for an expression of piety in worship as fasting, offerings, and sharing of food with the poor, all foster fellow feeling. The very nature of the festivals is to kindle joy and rejoicing.

Some of the most important temple festivals are regulated to help the pilgrims make their tours at leisure. In the days of yore, there were no good roads and facilities for transport. Devotees bound by religion and custom were enjoined to visit important festivals at major temples from time to time. It is interesting to note that all major festivals of Tamilnadu are spread out through all the twelve months of the year with the exception of Vaikāśi and Āni. This is because, the summer is severe here, all the rivers and tanks are dry and there is no rainfall. The second reason is the majority of the people who take part in these festivals are the rural folk, who are engaged in agriculture. Only a few months are they free from farm work and temple festivals are arranged to their convenience also.

The Purāṇas give accounts of festivals, which must have gained importance in society from time to time. Treatises like the Vratakośas must have been compiled, regarding all religious

observance. It is to be noted that the festivals are associated with the local temple or some important temple of great renown.

Some important accessories for the festival are light, flowers and arrangement for food.

Light is a symbol of joy, which is reflected on these occasions. God is the supreme effulgence, who leads us from the unreal to the real and from darkness to light. So, the little lamp symbolises God, the eternal light. The lighting of the lamp in the soul was the conception of the Mudal Ālvārs, Poigai, Bhūttam and Pei -to have a vision in the dark corridor at Tirukkovalur. In the first Tiruvandādi[80]

The solid land - the lamp; its girdling liquid - the oil : and light and showing sun. And thus I shall discover the stealing stranger.

The next one Bhuta says :

Let me add my light with love the lamp - lying the oil - The frenzied heart the wick - the soul melted - The light of wisdom, light I to Narana In sweet Tamil, I know so well.[81]

The third one Pei sings-

Lo ! Her mercy. I see and His form of Gold I see
And their sun effulgent hues blending - indeed I see
Proud daring discus, and the friendly conch I see
All this, this blessed day, in Him the ocean hued[82]

"On lighting the lamp, the charmer with His Śrī who cannot abide alone without His lovers as light cannot without the sun.[83] *They were dazzled with the beauteous splendour.*

These verses have been enlightening and illumining the world, ever since Providence vouchsafed them to us through His Elect saviours.

Even in modern times, Rāmalinga Vallalār tried to introduce the worship of the Jyoti, as the universal symbol of the Eternal light.

Flowers: There is no ritual without flowers. Fragrant flowers like the jasmine, Chrysanthemum go for the worship of the deity.

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80. Vaiyam Tagali.
81. 2nd Tiruvandādi.
82. 3rd Tiruvandādi, A.Govindacarya - Life of the three saints.
83. ibid.

Vipra Nārāyaṇa Tonḍaraḍippoḍi Ālvār[84] decided to dedicate all the rest of his days to the service of cultivating and supplying flowers to the Lord, Śrī Ranganātha. "Tiruthuzhai Mālayane, Ponniśuzh Tiruvaranga".[85] Even Periālvār had spun into his floral wreath eight select species of flowers, typical of the eight kinds of mental worship pleasing to Viṣṇu : i) Non- injury, ii) Conquest of senses, iii) Kindness to all creatures, iv) Forgiveness, v) Prayer, vi) Austerity, vii) Mental Culture and viii) Truth.

Food arrangement during the festivals[86]: The realised food is Brahman; let no one revile food; life verily is food; *whoever knows this food, founded upon it gets founded; he, then becomes rich by food; He begets offspring; he becomes great by offspring, cattle and the splendour of Brahma; he becomes great in renown* -

So say the upanisads.

We do not know even the hoary antiquity of the festivals. They retained the best in the past culture and by celebrating in the present we hand it over to the future generations. Their nature being very conservative do not lend themselves to any great change and due to this rigidity they open up as windows for us to have a peep at the past. When I talk about change, it is even the physical change like lamps, flowers, camphor incense, sandal, turmeric, betels, fruits, coconuts. The Kolam and the festoons are a part of the decorations. Bath festivals, in the river or the sea, circumambulation and special food offerings are only a part of these. These have kept up a continuity of the ancient culture inspite of the great gloom and chaos caused by foreign aggressions.

Considerable importance is given to hills and rivers in the matter of dedication of the five elements to the supreme being, Lord Viṣṇu, the mythical ocean of milk is his place of rest and floating on a banyan leaf, reclining in conscious sleep "Arithuyil". At Śrīrangam, where Kāveri separates into two streams, the Lord lying on his Ādiseṣa circled by the water of the Kāverī.

In several other Rangams like Tippu's Śrīrangapaṭnam and Tiruinḍalur near Māyuram, Tiruvenkaṭam the northern border of Tamilnadu, Viṣṇu is in the standing posture. Such temples are

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84. ibid.,Manthilor thuimaillai - Vailor Insollilai Tirumālai ,p.6.
85. ibid.,Lifee of Tonḍaraḍippoḍi Alwar,p.3.
86. Taittriya Upaniṣad - Bhṛguvalli,Tritiyānuvākam.

ermed Tirumalai. Some more examples are Alagarmalai, the lassics speak of it as Tirumāliruņçolai.

The temple chariot fully carved and decorated is a delight which gives inexhaustible joy to the people. The Brahmotsava and the car festivals bring home to all, the oneness of mankind at different times, they strengthen the religious foundation of the pilgrims and provide them with aesthetic pleasure. At the time of the festival, social and racial distinctions are forgotten. Racial and other differences are tolerated during these festivals.

The greatness and importance of a temple is generally estimated by the grandeur of the festivals celebrated in it and by the character of the congregation. Moreover, a festival is a grand annual fair where business and social transactions take place on a large scale attracting the learned and religious minded men who conduct discourses on religious and philosophical subjects. They form a group or a goșțhi and recite the Vedas and Prabandhas before and after the deity in procession. Pipers and even a band of dancing girls with their abhinayam, all make a part of it. Even lifting and holding a huge sixteen span umbrella for the Lord is a grand thing to watch. Philanthropists have constructed spacious choultries for arrangement of free food and lodgings. This is sometimes by co-operative effort of a number of villages pooling their contribution for mass feeding.

THE DETAILS OF THE MONTHLY FESTIVALS OF THE ŚRĪRANGAM TEMPLE

Water for all pujas, is fetched from the river Kāveri. During festivals the pots of water are brought on the back of the temple elephant, accompanied by music. This water is stocked in the silver pañçapātras kept in the sanctum. For purposes of pūjā the water is poured into five cups of silver arranged by the feet of the utsava beras at follows : four in the corners and one in the centre, viz., the arghya pātra in the southeast (agnēya) for washing the hands (of the God), pādya patra in the southwest (nirruti)for washing the feet, āçamanīya patra in the north-west (vāyu) for washing the mouth, snānīya pātra in the north-east (isāņyam) for the holy bath, and the sarvarta toya pātra in the centre containing water for general use. Paççai karpura (camphor), kasturi (musk), cardamoms and sandal paste are mixed with the water in these cups.

The priests who have duties inside the sanctum, viz., the Bhāgavata-nambis or Bhațțāl start the ceremonies with the

washing of the teeth and faces of the utsava-beras, which is done symbolically through the appropriate mañtras. Spoonfuls of water are offered for āçamanam (washing the feet). When the deity (Alagiyamaṇavālan) is supposed to be washing his teeth and face, an arçaka holds a mirror. Then follows the abhiṣekam or tirumañjanam (holy bath). This is done for the small silver image called the snānamūrti and the saṭakopan, which stands for the feet of the god. The jewels and clothing of this image are removed and a shower bath with warm water is provided by means of a sahasradhara or thousand-holed plate. The bath includes anointment with ghee and removing it by the application of the powder of dry turmeric and melon (āmalaka or nellikkai). The abhiṣekam of the procession image of the god (Alagiyamaṇavālan) or the utsavāngasnānam is done in the mahāmanṭapa on the ekādaśi and amāvāsya days and on the first, seventh and last days of brahmotsavas. There are also special baths like the jyeṣṭhābhiśekam. The holy baths given in the sanctum are in camera, but those given in the manṭapas are open to public view. In the case of the God the vastra is quickly changed thrice but in the case of the Goddess, i.e., the Śrīranga Nāççiyar, the bath is given with the clothes on. It may be stated here that the bronzes themselves have ornate representations of clothing and jewellery. On all these occasions, the puruṣasūktam is recited by the Bhaṭṭas. The issue of the divine order through the mouth of an arçaka and the person or persons so addressed obeying it saying *nayande, nayande (my lord ! my lord !)* and the dramatisation of the whole process are said to be characteristic of treating the God as King (Rangaraja). Verses from the prabandhas of the Ālvārs are also recited by the Arayar. In the month of Dhanus or Margali the Tiruppāvai is recited by the Arayar during the holy bath.

So far as the mula bera or Periya Perumāl is concerned, the image is smeared with sandalwood oil after the ornaments and clothes are removed, except for a loin cloth, and it is kept in that condition for six weeks after the jyeṣhṭhābhiṣekam and again for six weeks after the Pavitrotsavam. During this period the divine frame, excepting the face and chest, is screened off. At the close of each period, the oil smear is washed off and the decorations restored. Between the two periods there is a short break usually of ten days. On Fridays, in other periods, 'punugu' oil, mixed with camphor oil is applied to the chest and feet of the image.

Alaṅkāram and ārādhana

After the abhiśekam of the snānamūrti on ordinary days and of the utsavamūrti on special days, the image is wiped dry with washed and dried vastras and is properly clothed with the pītāṁbaras, and kasturi mixed with punugu is applied on the forehead. The jewels are restored and the image is decorated with garlands of fresh flowers. All this is done in camera. During this period the vīṇa is again played in the Alagiyamanavālan-tirumanṭapa. Once the alankāram or decoration is over, the screen is drawn off and the devotees, gathered in the above mantapa, enter the Gāyatri manṭapa to get a darśan of the deities.

Ārādhana or worship is done with tulasi leaves. It is accompanied by the recitation of the stotra mantras in Sanskrit and the Tamil prabandhas. This recitation is called veda-viṇṇappam. The worship is concluded by the offering of incense and mangalārati or the waving of varieties of lamps of ghee like the pot lamp or kumbha-ārati having one wick, the Rāmānujan lamp with seven wicks, etc., again accompanied by recitations. After this is over, worship may be offered with tulasi leaves and flowers by the arçkas on behalf of individuals. This is called arçana.

Naivedyam

After the ārādhana comes the feeding of the deity - represented by the small silver image called the bali bera. This is called bhojyāsanam or naivedyam. A few cooks from the madappalli bring the cooked rice and other items of eatables like kṣīrannam (milk- rice), appam (sweet cakes), sweet pongal, etc. These are brought in baskets. The rice basket or taligai is emptied over a piece of cloth called pavadai in front of the utsavamūrtis above the slab called amudu-pārai. Torches are held during the 'divine meal' and cameras are waved. When the meal is over, betel and nuts are offered. This is followed by the offering of water for a 'mouthwash'. Naivedyam goes on in camera. It is similarly offered to the various deities in the sub-shrines.

The routine of the pūjā described above is repeated at noon in a shortened form including all items except the bath. On some occasions like the ekādaśi, the bath is offered at noon.

The pūjā is performed again in the evening, when there is only public worship, and in the night (at about 8.30 p.m.).It is

generally the practice now-a-days to admit the devotees only after the puja is over.The naivedyams for these pūjās keep varying.

A certain time is allotted for free seva or darśan and then arçana or worship is done on behalf of individuals on payment of a fixed sum. In the night, pūjās are wound up with the offering of milk. Formerly, say in the Vijayanagar period, kaşāya or medicinal decoction was offered along with milk. It was prepared and brought from the arogyaśala, i.e., the shrine of Dhanvantri. There is however no ceremony here of putting the God to sleep as he is in yoga-śayana.

Festivals

Festivals are always associated with a Hindu temple and this tradition seems to be as old as that of the ceremonial pujas. On festive occasions, the divine images are specially decorated and taken out of the temple in procession - seated on vāhanas or vehicles and accompanied with music. They are very popular and are attended by a concourse of people, particularly the car festival or rathotsava - attracting people from far and near. The festivals are largely seasonal in character. They are also commemorative, recalling some exploits of Viṣṇu - as related in the purāṇas. The adhyayanotsava is based entirely on the recitations of the prabandhas. It is noteworthy that different structures attain a meaning and as significance in the association with particular festivals without which they are just enclosed spaces and nothing more, for instance - the Pavitra manṭapa.

The inscriptions in the Śrīrangam temple contain more references to festivals than to pūjās. Some of these have been mentioned earlier. An inscription dating back to the 16th year of Vikrama Çola (1136 A.D.)[87] registers a gift of land for feeding brāhmaṇa pilgrims during the Panguni festivals. An inscription of Jaṭavarman Vīra Pāṇdya refers to the Kārtikai festival. Inscriptions of the Vijayanagar period refer to the Ādibrahmotsava, the Kauśika tirunal, Vedaparayana tirunāl or Adhyayanotsava, Śrījayanti and Mahānavami festivals, etc. An inscription dated S. 1331 (A.D. 1409) refers to a gift of 135 gold pieces (pons) by Mahāmanḍalesvara Vīra Bhūpati Uḍayār for conducting a festival to the god in his name on the day of his

87. Hari Rao - History of the Śrīrangam temple

ıatal star, Punarpūśam. The conduct of the charity was left in harge of Uttamanarhbi. Another inscription dated S. 1355 (A.D. 433)[88] says that Annappa Çaundappa instituted a car festival to e celebrated on the day of Uttirāḍam, the natal star of his father, Adityadeva Uḍayār and also presented an elephant for service luring the same festival. There are references to the iankramaṇam festival, the Çitrāpaurnami festival, etc., in other nscriptions.

Types of festivals : Parvotsavas, etc.

Festivals may be classified into Parvotsavas Ekadinotsavas, Māsotsavas and brahmotsavas. Parvotsavas are simple festivals elebrated within the temple on the five following occasions or ançaparvas, each month: (i) māsa sankramaṇam or the ommencement of every month, (ii) amāvāsya, (iii) paurnami, iv) and (v) being the two ekādaśis in each month. In addition, arvotsava is celebrated on the day of Revati, which is supposed o be the natal star of the God Ranganātha, actually the star of onsecration of the image. On all these occasions, the utsava mages are brought out of the sanctum into the mahamanṭapa, aken down the western steps into the first or Rājamahendran nclosure, where they are taken in procession pradakṣina-wise ınd brought back to the manṭapa through the eastern steps. The eremony of ascending the steps is called padiyerram and is erformed to appropriate music. The God and the Goddesses are eated in the sandalwood pavilion called Çandana manṭapa and ujas are performed there. At the close of the ceremonies, the mages are taken down along the eastern steps and in - back to he manṭapa by ascending the western steps, whence they are estored to their position in the sanctum. When bigger festivals re being celebrated the parvotsavas get merged with them.

The ekadinotsava festivals, as the name suggests - last only or a day and those of this class of festivals are - the Çitra Paurnami, Jyeshṭhābhiśekam, Patineṭṭām perukku (Āḍi 18th), Çrī ayanti, Vijayadaśami, Dipāvali, Kārttikai dīpam, Sankrānti and Yugādi. The monthly masotsavas and the annual brahmotsavas ast for a few days, usually about ten days. The important nāsotsavas are the pūççātta -tirunāl or the flower festival Dhavanotsava) in Çittirai, also called Koḍattirunal when the leities are specially decorated with flowers. The month, roughly

8. Hari Rao - ibid.

corresponding to April, marks the beginning of the flowering season.The Vasantotsava in held Vaikaşi, the Jyeshṭhābhişekam in Āni, the Pavitrotsavam in Āvaṇi, and the dolotsavam is celebrated in Māśi.The Navarātri in Puraṭṭāśi is celebrated solely for the Goddess, Śrīranga Nāççiyār. It is the practice that all functions and processions of the masotsavas are held in the evenings. Three Brahmotsavas are celebrated in the months of Çittirai (Viruppan tirunāl), Tai (Bhūpati tirunāl) and Panguni (Adibrahmotsavam). The distinguishing marks of a brahmotsava are its commencement with dhvajārohaṇam or the hoisting of the flag on the flagstaff and its conclusion with the rathotsavam or car festival.The following few pages touch upon the main festivals, briefly describing them as they occur in the Hindu solar calendar commencing with the month of Çittirai (Çaitra), the year commencing from mid-April, i.e., from the Tamil New year's day.

Festivals in the month of Çaitra (April-May) kodaittirunāl

The Kodaittirunāl or summer festival, also called the puççāttutirunāl or flower festival, is celebrated for ten days preceding the full-moon day in the month of Çaitra (Çitrā Paurnami). On all these days, the God is profusely decorated with flowers and is stationed in the evenings in a four pillared manṭapa, facing south, in the maṇalveli or open space in the eastern wing of the third prākāra. The pūjā is followed by the offering of the naivedyam, consisting of pānakam and soaked and sweetened green gram dal;subsequently tīrtham is distributed among the devotees . From the 6th day, the God is taken to the Dorai manṭapam, prākāra, and stationed in the raised pavilion, where pūjā and naivedyam are offered. While the God returns to the sanctum pradakşiṇa-wise vīnāvādyam is performed by the hereditary Vaişṇava musician. The Kodai festival is celebrated also for Śrīranga Nāççiyār in her own temple for ten days during this month.

Çitrā paurnami

On the Çitrā-paurnami the god is taken in procession to a manṭapa, called the Ammā-manṭapam, about a mile due south of the temple and lying on the northern bank of the Kāveri, and ceremonies are performed - recalling the Gajendra--Mokşa. After abişekam, the God is taken to the edge of the bank, near the waters and there He blesses Gajendra - represented by the temple

elephant. Puja is again performed in the sands. Then the God returns to the mantapa and back to the temple.

Śrī Ramanavami

On the day of Śrī Rāmanavami, the Lord is seated in state in the Arjuna mantapa. The image of Çerakulavalli Nāççiyār, who is supposed to be an incarnation of Sītā and one of the eight consorts of Ranganātha is brought from her shrine nearby and seated by his side. Abhiṣekam is performed for both and puja and naivedyam follow. While returning to the sanctum, the Lord escorts the goddess to her shrine.

The Brahmotsavam

The Çittirai brahmotsavam, called the Viruppan-tirunāl, commences eight days prior to the day of Revati, the star of the God's consecration. On that day the rathotsavam has to be celebrated. The routine of every brahmotsava is more or less the same. On the first day, the ceremony of ankurārpaṇam or 'sprouting of the seeds' takes place. In presence of the images of Viśvaksena and Ānjaneya, the temple servants on their behalf bring holy earth from beneath the bilva tree there. A few priests go to the river bank and collect some sand, chanting the bhūsūkta. The mud and sand are mixed and moistened and are kept in pots in the yagasala. Cereals are sown in these and they begin to sprout in a few days. On the second day the Senāpati, i.e., Viśvaksena, conceived as the commander-in-chief of Viṣṇu goes round the streets for nagaraśodanai, (inspection of the town) i.e., his image is taken in a simple procession along the four Çitra-streets. When he returns, the Garuḍa pratiṣtha is done, i.e., a picture of Garuḍa is painted on a piece of canvas and consecrated with appropriate mantras and kept in the Alagiyamanavālan tirumanṭapa. In other words the Garuḍa-dhvaja is made ready for being hoisted on the dhvajasthamba the next day. This ceremony is called the dhvajārohaṇam. In the morning the dhvaja is ceremoniously carried on a plank along the Çitrā streets and brought back and kept near the dhvajasthamba. The God is now stationed in a small raised manṭapa near the shrine of Āñjaneya to the south-east of the dhvajasthamba and the balipiṭha in the spacious southern wing of the second prākāra. Pūjā and naivedyam are offered to the God and Garuḍa is consecrated in the dhvaja. Then the arulappādu for flag hoisting is given, i.e., an arçaka hails, on behalf of the God, 'paro' (Tamil para, i.e., 'fly, lengthened out,) and another, who stands above the terrace

near the aperture through which the staff juts out, draws up the dhvaja and ties it to the top of the staff.

The same evening the God and the two Goddesses, i.e., the utsava beras, are decorated and seated in the Ålagiyamanavālan tirumanṭapa and the ceremony of bherītāḍanam or beating the drum is performed. Pūjā is done to the bheri and it is struck with the recitation of the bherītāḍatanam slokas. The purpose of the sloka is to invite the Gods, the dikpālas and devotees to the brahmotsava. Three beats of the drum follow each śloka. The God and the Goddesses are then taken in procession round the Çitrā streets. When they return to the temple the God gets down from the ççhapra, leads the Goddesses into the sanctum and then he returns alone and goes to the yāgaśāla where he is offered tirumañjanam or bath (abhiṣekam). Pūjā and naivedyam follow. Ghee offerings are made in five sacrificial fire pits (pançakuṇda homam). Then the God returns to the mahomanṭapa but does not get into the sanctum. As he is supposed to have started on a yātrā or journey he makes yātrādānam and fulfills his yātrāsaṅkalpam by staying outside the sanctum. His image is kept for ten days in the mirror room in the south-eastern corner of the manṭapa. This brings the first day's festival to a close.

From the second day onwards, the God is taken every morning round the Çitrā streets and is brought back to the mahāmanṭapa. The Vahanas or vehicles change. On the 4th day he comes out on Garuḍa (Garuḍa seva). On the 8th day, e.g., he rides the horse. On the next day (Revati nakṣattra) he is drawn round the Çitrā streets in a chariot (ratha). On the tenth day tirumañjanam is performed in the mahāmanṭapa. In the evening, He goes round the Çitrā streets in procession and then comes round the inner enclosures staying at stipulated places and receiving the ubhayam or honours and offerings made by the ubhayakār or donor. This happens in the course of each procession. On this occasion he stays for a while in the 1000 pillared manṭapa and then proceeding due south comes to the Uḍayavar shrine. During this promenade the choristers in the tiruvolakkam chant the Rāmānuja- nurrandādi. The image of Rāmānuja is brought out by an ācārya on the palm of his right hand (Kaittala sevai) and on his (Rāmānuja's) behalf coconut juice is offered to the God, who proceeds then towards the sanctum. He stays for a while near the dhvajasthambha in the second enclosure and hears the padippu or tiruppaṇi mālai recited. This

gives an account, in Tamil verse form, of the various festivals of the temple and the services rendered by the tenkalai Śrīvaiṣṇavas during those festivals. It is popularly attributed to Rāmānuja and is recited at the close of each festival. After the Perumāl goes into the sanctum and is restored to his original place on the bhūpālarāyan, i.e., the gold plated pedestal, the dhvaja is pulled down in the night. Though the festival is closed with this the God is taken in procession along the Çitrā streets in a specially decorated flower palanquin on the evening of the 11th day. To the common people, this is the last function of the Çittirai brahmotsavam.

Vasantotsava in the month of Vaiṣāka or Vaikāṣi (May-June)

The Vasantotsava commences eight days before Paurnami (full- moon day) of this month. In the evening of the first day the God and the two Goddesses are taken in procession from the mahāmanṭapa to the Vasantamanṭapa (a square manṭapa in the centre of a tank, which is surrounded by a pillared verandah on all four sides, the southern wing having an extended manṭapa in the centre). The God is adorned with turmeric powder (çūrṇābhiṣekam) and puja and naivedyam follow. The Tiruppallāndu is recited during the çūrṇābhiṣekam. The dancing girls attached to the temple used to perform the kolāṭṭam dance in the southern manṭapa after pūjā and sing and dance as the deities were taken back to the sanctum. These practices disappeared with the abolition of the institution of temple dancing girls. Music performances have now taken their place. From the second day onwards the God alone is taken to the Vasanta manṭapa and the ceremonies are performed on a simpler scale. On the 7th day the God and the Goddesses are taken in procession to the manṭapa. (It is generally the practice to take the God and the Goddesses together in processions on the first and seventh days only of the mahotsavas). On the 9th day (paurnami) the God is given the çūrṇābhiśekam in the sanctum and, after puja, is taken round the Çitrā streets on the horse vehicle and back to the sanctum. Visits to the Vasanta manṭapa cease with this day.

For Śrīranga Nāççiyār the Vasantotsava is celebrated in her own temple for seven days in the same month in a small tank behind her shrine. This is called the Keḍākkulitirunāl.

Jyeṣṭhābhiṣekam in the month of Jyeṣṭhā or Āni (June-July)

Jyesṭhābhiśekam is performed on the day of jyeṣṭhānakṣatra in the month of Āni. In the morning of this day, water is brought from the Kāveri in a pot of gold - on the back of an elephant with great pomp and music. Some arçakas fetch water in silver pots - also following the elephant in procession. After the images in the sanctum, viz., the God and the two Goddesses, the yagnamūrti and the beras for snānam, śayanam, bali and Tirtham are all removed to the tiruvuṇṇali and arranged on different pedestals, they are given a series of baths in water, milk, curd, honey and the juices of sugarcane, lime, mango and other fruits. About a thousand small cups, arranged in four corners of a square, two hundred and fifty forming each corner, are used for the abhiṣekam. Hence it is called Sahasrakalaśābhiṣekam. Intermittently they are cleaned with soap nut powder, turmeric powder and varieties of perfumed stuffs. Then they are bathed with sandal paste and water again. They are wiped dry but the ornaments, armour (kavaçam) and the clothes are not restored. In the same way the mulabera, i.e., the reclining Ranganātha image, is divested of its ornaments and attire and sandalwood oil, specially prepared for the purpose in the temple, is applied to the divine frame in the immediate presence of Śrīraṅganārāyana Jiyar.

In the evening, naivedyam is offered to the The nijattirumeni, or the true frame i.e., the image without ornaments and clothing. Only at about 10 or 11 p.m.,are the images restored to their original places in the sanctum and again decorated with ornaments, etc. During this interval, repairs if any, are done to the ornaments. The abhiṣekam and naivedyam are done in camera, the devotees having sevā not earlier than the next morning, when the routine pūjā is followed by the arçanas of the devotees. The madhyāna pūjā is followed by mahānaivedyam, which consists of a large quantity of rice (said to be 1000 measures) cooked and spread over the floor of the Alagiyamanavālan-tirumanṭapa. Later it is distributed among the arçakas and the devotees.

Jyeṣṭhābhiṣekam is done for Śrīraṅganāççiyār on Friday and for Çakrattālvār on a Saturday, closely following the abhiṣekam of Ranganātha.

'atineṭṭām perukku : 18th of Āśādha or Āḍi (July-August)

This festival celebrates the floods in the river Kāveri during he monsoon following summer. The celebration comes 35 days fter Jyeṣāhābhiṣekam and may coincide with Āḍi 18th or 28th .)n that day, the God is taken to the Ammā manṭapam on the ›ank of the river in the evening and is offered pūjā and ıaivedyam. Then a mangala-sūtra, a new saree, a garland of the ;od, pan-supari and prasāda are placed on the back of the temple :lephant, taken to the edge of the river and thrown into the vaters. Prasāda is distributed among the devotees and the God s taken back to the temple in the night. The God is supposed o grace the river Goddess and take her as his spouse. The)ivyasūriçaritam (15th sarga) says that - in the month of Āḍi, he river became turbulent with sharp freshes and floods and hat when Rangarāja came to her and offered her his garland ılong with mangala-sūtra she became modest and went past ;ently like a newly wedded bride.

'estivals in the month of Śrāvana or Āvaṇi (August-September)

Śrījayanti

On the day of the Rohiṇī nakśatra, Śrījayaṇti or the birth ›f Kṛṣṇa is celebrated. The main utsava bera is taken in procession o the Śrībhanḍara manṭapa and is given tirumañjanam. During he holy bath, the verses of Periyālvār's Peria-Tirumoli dealing vith the childhood of Kṛṣṇa are recited by the arayar. The next lay, the uriyaḍi is celebrated - which commemorates the līlā of Bālākṛṣṇa stealing curd from the pots hung up in the houses of he gopis. In the morning, the utsava bera of Kṛṣṇa from the Kṛṣṇa shrine in the Kili manṭapa is decorated and taken in ›rocession round the Çitrā streets. In the evening Alagiyamanavālan and the two devīs are taken in procession to he uriyaḍi manṭapam on the banks of the Tirumanjana-kāveri (a ›ranch of the Kāveri flowing through the town), where pūjā is ›ffered. The images are then taken in procession through the Çitrā streets. Near the gateway which leads to the south Uttārā street, a curd pot is hung up in a specially erected pavilion. A priest breaks it ceremoniously with a stick. The God and the Goddesses then return to the sanctum.

The Pavitrotsava

The Pavitrotsava commences on the ekādaśi day of the bright half of the month of Āvaṇī. The God is taken to the yāgasala. Near its footsteps navaratna piṭhārohaṇam is observed i.e., the image is stationed for a while on a bed of multicoloured flowers. In the yāgasala an elaborate tiruvārādhana or worship is started. The Mangalārati is done a three hundred and sixty times. This is followed by tirumañjanam and naivedyam. In the meanwhile, the pavitras i.e., cotton threads of different sizes are tied together - the knots resembling beads : which are intended for adorning the hands, feet, neck, crown, etc., of the divine images. These are readied and placed in new earthen pots, which are arranged on heaps of paddy amidst the chanting of appropriate Vedic hymns, which are supposed to instil life into them (prāṇapratiṣṭha). Then the longest pavitra, the vanamāla pavitra, is taken out and carried to the sanctum and the mula bera is adorned with it. The utsavar is then carried back to the sanctum from the yāgaśāla. On the next day, i.e., dvādaśi, ārādhana or mangalārati is done a three hundred and sixty times to each one of the seven deities in the sanctum, viz., the mula bera or Periya Perumāl, the utsava bera or Alagiyamanavalan, with his two consorts, Śrī and Bhū, Tiruvarangamāligaiyar, near the feet of the mūlavar, and the four mūrtis for snānam, śayanam, bali and tīrtham. The pavitras are now removed from the yāgaśāla and are placed on the hands, feet, crowns etc. of the images, including the mulavar. The devotees are permitted to have pavitraseva i.e., beholding the Gods decorated with the pavitras, throughout the day. This goes on day after day. Pūjā, naivedyam and distribution of tīrtham are done in the evenings. From the second day, the utsava beras are stationed in the pavitramanṭapa to facilitate seva.

On the 7th day the God with the ubhayanāççimār, i.e., the two Goddesses, are taken in procession to the Tirukkoṭṭāram or granary and the ceremony of Dhanyāmānam takes place. On behalf of the deity, an arçaka calls out to the measure-man (Kālālappan) to come and measure the stock. This ceremony is repeated on the seventh day of the Vasantotsavam, Dolotsavam, teppotsavam and the three brahmotsavas. On the ninth day, tīrthavāri is done in the evening. The snānamūrti is taken out to the manṭapa on the bank of the Çandrapuṣkariṇi and tirumañjanam is done. The arçaka takes the image in his hand and dips it in water. This is done on the 9th day of the Pavitrotsava, the Ḍolotsava, and the three Brahmotsavas. After

that the images are taken back into the sanctum after pavitra viniyogam.

Festivals in the month of Bhādrapada or Puraṭṭāśi (September-October)

The Navarātri or Mahānavami festival for the Nāççiyār

The Navarātri or Dasara festival is celebrated only in the temple of the Goddess Śrīranga Nāççiyār. It lasts for nine days. At noon on the first day, tirumañjanam is done for the Goddess in the sanctum accompanied by Vedic recitations in the manṭapa outside. This is followed by pūjā and the ceremony of rakṣabandhanam for the Goddess and the horse-vehicle (the latter is the vehicle of the God on the Vijayadaśami of the tenth day). The Goddess graces the animal and wishes the Lord all success in his 'expedition'. In the evening, the Goddess is taken in procession through the prākāra and is stationed in the ornate four pillared black-granite pavilion in the Navarātri manṭapa. It is a practice in Śrīrangam that the Goddess, Śrīranga Nāççiyār, is never taken outside her own precincts. Pūjā and naivedyam are followed by tīrtha-viniyogam. Music performances are arranged in the spacious outer manṭapa. A display of fireworks, on a small scale, is also arranged in the open space opposite.

On the following seven days, routine pūjās are offered in the sanctum in the mornings and alankara-sevā in the manṭapa in the evenings, i.e., pūjā and darśan with special decorations. On the seventh day tirumañjanam is done in the manṭapa which is open to public sevā. The bath is given to the images with the raiments on. Pūjā and naivedyam follow. In the meanwhile the God sends his garlands to the Goddess. They are received with great pomp to the tune of music and the Goddess is adorned with them. Tīrthaviniyogam is followed by rakṣābandhana-visarjanam for the Goddess and the horse i.e., the protective threads which were tied round the wrist and neck of the Goddess and the horse on the first day are untied. Later the Goddess is restored to her place in the sanctum. The horse-vehicle is now taken to the God's shrine, where rakṣābandhanam is done both for the Him and the His mount for the next days' Vijayadaśami.

Vijayadaśami

In the morning, the God is taken in procession in a palanquin in the iśānya or north-eastern direction, which is supposed to

be auspicious. Actually the God goes east, towards the shrine of Kāṭṭalagiyaśingar for Vijaya or conquest. He is stationed in the outer manṭapa and pūjā and naivedyam follow. He then mounts the horse vehicle, brought earlier from the main shrine. He stops opposite the vanni tree within the spacious compound of the shrine and performs puja to it. The hunting scene or mṛgayotsava is enacted here. Cane bows with arrows of cane with brass heads are ceremoniously brought on elephant back and an arçaka fires the arrows in different directions. To indicate that a few animals are shot by the arrows a goat's ear is pricked by an arçaka or a temple servant. It is said that this was formerly done by a temple dancing girl. He is also supposed to kill Vanyāsura or a forest demon. The God then returns to his shrine and has tirumañjanam along with the devis on the amudupārai, i.e., the central platform in the gāyatṛi manṭapa.

Festivals in the month of Tula or Aippasi (October- November)

The Ḍolotsava

The Ḍolotsava or the swing festival commences eight days before ekādaśi during the dark fortnight of this month. On the first eight days the God is brought to the ūnjal or swing manṭapa in the evenings and seated on the swing.On the first and seventh days he is accompanied by the two devīs. After pūjā and naivedyam the swing is gently rocked. As it is rocked, the 'swing' songs of the Ālvārs, viz., Periyālvār and Kulaśekhara Ālvār are sung. Formerly the courtesans of the temple used to sing the Śrīranganāthar-ūsal and the śrīranganāyakiyāūsal, the swing songs composed by Pillai Perumāl Aiyangār (c.1300). On the seventh day, the God and the Goddesses are taken to the Tirukoṭṭaṙam for the ceremony of dhanyamānam or measuring of the paddy. On the ninth and last day, tirthavāri is celebrated as described earlier (under Pavitrotsava). After this, pūjā is offered to the God stationed on the swing, followed by rocking of the swing, naivedyam and tīrthaviniyogam.

A swing festival for Śrīranga Nāççiyār, lasting seven days, is celebrated soon after in the ūnjal manṭapa in the western wing of the prākāra of her own shrine.

The Dipāvali

On this day, the God is brought out of the sanctum and is stationed facing east, as is usual on a pedestal - in front of the

;andana manṭapa pavilion in the mahāmanṭapa. Pūjā is offered ınd then the deity is given a holy bath. The fifteen images of he Ālvārs and ācāryas are brought and kept in the kilimanṭapam o the east of the mahāmanṭapa. Naivedyam is offered after the :eremonious bath. Two cloth bags, each containing five hundred upees in coins, are brought from the dhvajasthambha with ›omp to the accompaniment of music and placed near the feet ›f the God. When the Perumāl rises on the shoulders of the ›earers, arulappāḍu is issued to the Fifteen. Their respective mages are brought one by one, in the order mentioned in the ırulappādu,viz., Nammālvār, Tirumangai Ālvār, Uḍayavar, 'eriyālvār, the Ālvārs madhurakavi, Poigai, Bhūtam, Pei, Kulaśekhara, Tiruppāṇa, Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi and Tirumaliśai and he ācāryas Tirukkaççinambi, Kūrattālvān and Pillai Lokāçārya. As each image is brought near the Perumāl, a vastra or new ;arment is offered, the çauri or śaṭhāri is waved in honour and ı bit of the God's sandal-paste is placed on its anjalihasta. The 'erumal then goes back to the sanctum while the Ālvārs and ıcāryas return to their respective shrines.

Throughout the month of tula, the abhiṣeka water for the God is brought from the Kaveri in a gold vessel on the back of he temple elephant. Silver cups used in pūjā are also replaced ›y gold cups.

'estivals in the month of kārttikai (November-December)

'he Kaiśika or Kauśika-tirunāl

On the night of the ekādaśi after Dipāvali, the God is .dorned with a suit composed of three hundred and sixty different ›ieces of garments. He is supposed to be protected against the old of the season. Four bags containing three hundred and sixty ilk pieces are brought. The sthānika calls out for the cloth saying *Tiruvaḍivalarvaḍel*. An arçaka takes out one silk piece and places t in a silver plate held by another, who brings it saying *"nayande, ıayande"*. Another takes it from the plate and covers the utsava ›era with it. Actually, he places it on the cylindrical pillow behind he image. Then the sthanika calls for betel and nut saying, *aṭaikkāyamudu- nīṭṭuvadel"*. The custodian of betel leaves and nuts ;ives the pān-supari to a servant, who gives it to a pariçāraka, vho receives it in the silver plate and takes it to the arçaka again aying, *"nāyande, nāyande"*. The arçaka takes it near the mouth ›f the deity and keeps it aside. Then the sthānika calls for the līpa or lamp saying, *"tiruvilakku-tunḍuvadel"*. One pariçāraka

brings it on the silver plate. An arçaka waves it in front of the God and then throws it down. This threefold process is repeated three hundred and sixty times. After this is over, the Kaiśika purāṇa, an episode in the Varaha purāṇa is recited by the hereditary paurāṇica, who is the descendant of Bhaṭṭar.

The bonfire or sokkappānai

On the day of paurnami, the God is given tirumañjanam and then the ceremonies for the sokkappānai or bonfire in the night are commenced. Agnipratisṭhā is performed in the maḍapalli. From this holy fire of nine lamps are lit, of which one is a silver lamp and the rest are of earthenware. Led by a member of the Uttamanaṁbi family, these are brought to the sanctum, shown to the deities and kept there. Uttamanaṁbi is sent back to his house with temple honours. At nightfall, the God is taken in procession to the Çakrattālvar shrine, from where he witnesses the bonfire. Over a thirty foot high scaffolding, erected between the Ānjaneya shrine and the kārttikai gopuram, cartloads of dry palmyra leaves are stacked and are set on fire by a person, who has the hereditary right to do it, with one of the lamps brought from the maḍappalli and which had been kept in the sanctum. This bonfire, whose flames rise to a height of about three hundred feet, is supposed to commemorate the Trivikrama avatāra - in partial fullfilment of Mahābali's wish to see Viṣṇu's huge form again. After the bonfire, the God is taken pradakṣina-wise to the Nāççiyār shrine, where he is offered Tiruvandikkāppu. Then he is brought back to the sanctum through the third prākāra and the Āryabhattal-vāsal.

The Tirumugappattaiyam or divine epistle

As Kārttikai was the natal star of Tirumangai Ālvār, who first made arrangements for the recitations of Tiruvāimoli of Nammālvār in the Śrīrañgam temple (and for that purpose invited the Ālvār i.e., his image from Tirunagari, partly to perpetuate his memory) a letter is dictated by an arçaka to the temple scribe, as though emanating from the God, inviting Nammālvār to come and conduct the festival of Vedapārāyaṇa in the next month (the Adhyayanotsava in Mārgali). The ceremonies start with the calling out for the Arayar or the hereditary temple singer by the sthānika who says, *"Arulappāḍu Madiyada daivangal Manavālapperumāl' Arayar"*, the latter being a title of the Ārayar, who steps forward and is honoured with tīrtham, sandal paste, garlands and parivaṭṭam. He then recites a few verses of the Periya Tirumoli

irumangai Ālvār. The God hears them and is reminded of Ālvār. The sthānika then says, *"Arulappāḍu ṅga-Nārāyaṇappiriyān"*, the latter being a title of the scribe or untant (kaṇakuppillai). When the latter steps forward, he is similarly honoured. Since Arulappāḍu is a divine mandment the person addressed always responds says *ande, nāyande"*. The epistle is to the following effect : *"While vere seated on the Çera-Paṇḍyan throne placed above the couch of hararāya and below the pearl canopy of Sundara Pāṇḍya in the iyamaṇavālan Tirumanṭapa and listening to the verses of Kaliyan ımangai Ālvār) the chief of the temple servants and the Vaiṣṇava itaries approached Us and appealed to Us that We should repeat onour done to Our Saṭakopan (Nammālvār) once before. Hence We ending Our used mantle, sandal paste and garlands (to Nammālvār ıgh the Talaiyiḍuvan."* *The sthānika now commands : "write it it, read it again"*. The epistle is written by the scribe on an or palmyra leaf and tied to the forehead of the Talaiyiḍuvan. treated as a crown and the rituals of coronation are briefly through. the epistle is thus taken to the shrine of ımālvār and handed over to the Ālvār. As the Talayiḍuvan he chief of the temple servants, referred to as the mander-in- chief or Senāpati-durantara, he is followed by all other servants, including the bearers. Hence the image of the is carried back to the sanctum from the mahāmanṭapa by d, by an arçaka. This is referred to as Kaittala-sevai (i.e., an from the palm of the hand).

ivals in the month of Dhanus or Margali (Mrgasirsa, Dec.-ıary)

Every dawn, throughout this month, the God is awakened the recital of the Tirupallieluçci of Tonḍaraḍippoḍi Ālvār ıwed by the Tiruppāvai of Āndāl, both of which are prabodha gs i.e., songs for awaking and meant for being sung early in morning.

Adhyayanotsava

This is a unique type of festival, conceived as a means of erving and perpetuating the treasure of devotional literature ded down by the Ālvārs viz., the Nālāyiraprabandham, by nging for their recitations in the divine presence. The festival ivided into two parts, viz., ten days before and ten days after ekadasi of the bright half of the month, which is the Vaikūṇṭa daśi. The first period of ten days is called Tirumoli-utsavam

: pagalpattu (ten days) and the second period of ten days i
ılled Tiruvaimoli utsavam or rāppattu (ten nights).

On the day previous to the first day festival, Tirumaṅgai
lvār's Tirunedundāndagam is recited. On the first day, th
ıutine early morning ārādhana, starting with the recitations c
ıe Tiruppalli eluççi and Tiruppāvai, is finished by 7 a.m. an
ıe God is taken in procession to the Arjuna mantapa an
ationed in the western pavilion. The fifteen images of the Ālvāı
ıd the Ācāryas are brought from their respective shrines an
ept in audience there. The Ārayars proceed to recite th
rabandhas. In the evening the God is restored to the sanctum
uring the first 10 days about 2,000 verses are covered, includin
eriya Tirumoli of Tirumaṅgai Ālvār consisting of 1,084 verses
he important verses in each work are recited with measure
ıtonation accompanied with cymbals. The import of the verse
often explained with abhinaya. Commentaries are also rea
ıt wherever necessary.

On the third day, the Arayars recite Periyālvār's Tirumol
ı one of its verses, beginning with the words "senniyongu,
ıe Ālvār expresses his thrilling experience when the Perumā
ıose to place His feet on his head. After reciting this verse, th
:ayars take the saṭakopam and place it over the heads of th
lvārs and the acāryas,then over their own heads and finall
lace it on the heads of the assembled devotees,blessing ther
l. On the fourth day, Kaṁsavadham or the killing of the asur
aṁsa by Kṛṣṇa is enacted in the nāyaka-nāyaki bhāva - one c
ıe arayars portrays the kuratti, i.e., the soothsayer, and give
ıe prediction that the Ālvār, conceived as a maiden would marr
person having super-human qualities, wielding a śaṅkha, çakra
:c., in other words, Viṣṇu. On the tenth day, Rāvaṇavadham i
ıacted. To commemorate the success of Rāma, the saṭakopar
placed on the heads of all assembled and this is followed b
rthaviniyogam. The same evening Mohanāvataram is presente
ı the Garuḍa manṭapam to commemorate Viṣṇu's manifestatio
; a bewitching maiden (mohini) to lure away the asuras fror
ıe amṛta or nectar produced during the samudramanthana c
ıe churning of the ocean, often referred to in the prabandhas
he image of the standing God is dressed up interestingly as tha
f a seated Goddess. The lower part is covered, false limbs ar
xed to reproduce the sitting posture of Śrīranga Nāççiyār, an
ıe image is provided with a lady's hairdo, head-ornaments
:wels and necklaces and appropriate clothing. Thi

epresentation of the God as the Goddess referred to a: nohini-alankāram and Nāççiyār- tirukkolam, attracts the heavies rowds of the festive season, particularly the women. Th omment usually made is that the God in his disguise is mor ttractive than the goddess herself. The God is taken back to th anctum at about 9 p.m.

The next day is Vaikunta ekādaśi. The god is taken out o he sanctum in procession during the small hours and statione n the koṭṭagaimanalveli, i.e., a specially erected pandal o avilion of bamboo and thatch in the sandy open space in th astern wing of the third prākāra. The God is taken pradakṣina vise through the paramapada-vāśal, which is the northern ateway of the second prākāra. Throughout the year it is kep losed and is opened only on this day and the succeeding day: f the Tiruvāimoli festival. Following the procession, the devotee: n their thousands pass through this gateway on the first day he fifteen Ālvārs and ācāryas are brought to the pandal an rulappādu is issued to them as referred to above. As each Ālvā r ācārya is called, his image is brought near the God and i: onoured with garlands, flowers, sandal paste and saṭakopam fter this the God is taken through the tattarai vāśal i.e., th atern gateway, to the Tirumāmaṇi mantapa i.e., the centra aised pavilion in the thousand pillared mantapa, designed lik ratha, with wheels and horses. He is followed by the Ālvārs he ācāryas and the devotees. The first centum of the Tiruvāimoli vhich consists of 1100 verses, is then recited by the Ārayars wit bhinayas and commentaries. On the next and succeeding days he God is taken through the paramapada-vāśal to the thousand illared mantapa and a centum of the Tiruvāimoli is recited. A: hese recitations are commenced in the late evening-early part o ight and go on for a few hours, the festival is called rāppatt r the festival of ten nights. On the 7th day, Hiraṇyavadham i: nacted, the ārayars explaining the tortures inflicted by Hiraṇāy n Prahlāda by means of abhinayas.

On the 8th day vedupari or the robbing of the God (b irumaṅgai Ālvār) is enacted. Originally a robber chieftain, th lvār once waylaid a marriage party, which consisted o lagiyamaṇavālan and Āndāl. The former whispered a mantra i is ear and the robber at once became a fervent devotee of th od. In the evening the God proceeds on his horse vehicle an nstead of passing through the paramapada-vāśal comes sout nto the third prākāra through the nalikettan and Aryabhatta

gateway and goes pradakṣiṇa-wise to the manalveli. When the God is stationed in the pavilion, the image of Tirumañgai Ālvār is brought before him with his hands tied with a piece of cloth. The dagger and spear temporarily fixed in the image are removed, the cloth is untied and the Ālvār reveals himself in the attitude of worship. The verses of the Ālvār beginning with the words *'vadinen vadi varundinen'* - expressing his deep feelings of repentance, are rendered by the arayar after arulappādu. A list of stolen articles is read out and a few samples are raised on a silver banner and shown to the devotees. The God then goes to the thousand-pillared mantapa and the 8th centum of the Tiruāimoli is recited. On the 10th day, is recited the last centum of the Tiruvāimoli, the concluding verse of which gives expression to the Ālvār's feelings when he attained to the feet of Viṣṇu. As the last ten of the centum is being sung, the seated image of Nammālvār is brought near the God and is placed face down so that his head touches the feet of the God and tulasi leaves are poured over the head and the divine feet. This ceremony is called Nammālvār mokṣam. After this is over, arulappādu is issued to the Ālvārs and ācāryas and they are brought to the divine presence. The God honours them with garlands, sandal paste etc., and then returns to the sanctum.

The next day i.e., the 22nd day from the day of the recitation of the Tiruneḍundānḍagam of Tirumangai Ālvār, the God stays in the sanctum and select verses from the last thousand of the 4000 prabandhas, together called the Iyarpa, are sung in the Gāyatri manṭapa. Some verses of the closing portions are recited inside the sanctum. These recitations, which are not accompanied by gesticulations or reading out of commentaries, are rounded off with the centum on Rāmānuja of Tiruvarangattamudanār (Rāmānuja Nurrandadi). It is recited by the lineal descendant of the author. This closing function is called śāttumurai. The person who recites this piece is sent home with honours, seated on a plank fixed to two poles and carried by bearers.

The Tirumoli and Tiruvaimoli festivals for the Nāççiyar are celebrated in a briefer way, five days being devoted for each while the Iyarpa is recited on the 11th day. The recitations closely follow those of the main festival and are to be finished before the commencement of the Tai brahmotsavam.

estivals in the month of Puṣya or Tai (January-February)
ankrānti (Pongal) and Kanu

On the first day of the new Tamil month of Thai, the God nd the Ubhaya-Nāççiyār are taken in procession early in the ıorning to the thousand-pillared manṭapa after pūjā and aivedyam. Here the Tiruppāvai is recited and this marks the losure of its daily recitation in the month of Mārgali Γiruppāvai-sṭṭumurai). On the next day called kanu, the God is ıken in the evening to the front part of the thousand-pillared ıanṭapa, (Kanumanṭapam) fully decked in pearl garments and ecorated with jewels of pearl. Pūjā and naivedyam are offered, ıe latter consisting of four varieties of rice, viz., tamarind-rice ɔuliogarai), curd-rice (dadhiyodanam), gingelly-rice (ellorai) and weetened-rice (sarkarai pongal). The God, then, mounts the orse-vehicles and rides up to the Rāyagopura in the south. He ; supposed to be hunting, in indication of which a goat's ear is inched near the gopura. The image is taken back to the sanctum, ıe procession passing through the Çitrā streets.

ai Brahmotsavam or Bhūpati Uḍaiyār tirunāl

Like the viruppan tirunāl or Çittirai Brahmotsavam, the Tai rahmotsavam is named after an early Vijayanagar chieftain, 'ho, among others, contributed to the restoration of the temple fter the Muslim raids of the 14th century. The routine of the tsava is the same as that of the Çittirai brahmotsava described ırlier. It starts with ankurārpaṇam and dhvajārohaṇam and the ;od is taken round the Uttirā streets. On the first day, the God nd the two Goddesses are taken in a simple procession. On the ›urth day, the God is taken on the Garuḍa vehicle (Garuḍasevai). ›n the sixth day, he rides the elephant mount. On the seventh ay the God appears with the Goddesses and together they roceed to the tirukkoṭṭaram for dhanyamānam. The next day, ıe God rides the horse-vehicle. The next, i.e., ninth day, is the ay of the rathotsava and the God is taken round the Uttirā :reets in a car. The festival concludes on the eleventh day, when ıe God is taken round in the evening in a palanquin decorated 'ith flowers.

he float-festival in the month of Māgha or Māśi (February-Iarch)

The festival of the teppam or Tiruppalliodam (the divine ırge) starts seven days before the dasami of the bright half of ıāśi. In the first few days, the God is taken in procession early

e morning to certain specified places on the outskirts of the le, e.g., the shrine of Tirukkuralappan in the south, the iyam village in the north, Navāb's garden in the west, etc.. e nights, the God is taken in procession round the Uttirā ts on different vāhanas or vehicles, e.g., Garuḍa on the h days, the elephant on the sixth day, etc.. On the seventh the God and the two consorts proceed to the granary for eremony of measuring the grain. In the evening of the eighth the God and the two Goddesses are taken to a decorated specially prepared for the occasion, in a huge tank, a few ngs to the west of the temple. The images are seated in the al pavilion erected on the float and pūjā and naivedyam are ed. The barge, illuminated with lights, is towed thrice round nasonry manṭapa in the centre of the tank . The images are brought back to the sanctum. The next morning, the God is taken in procession to the tank where he is offered ıañjanam. The same night, he rides the vāhana called ıprabha, containing a bright circular disc behind the image. procession moves along the Uttirā streets. A special feature is procession is the sahasra-dipa darśanam or panda-kātçi. ndred or more torches are held by bearers in two rows, thus ding an avenue for the procession, which moves between . This marks the close of the festival.

vals in the month of Phālguna or Panguni (March-April)

Yugādi

On the day of yugādi or samvatsarādi, i.e., the New Year's according to the lunar calendar, the God is offered ıañjanam, pūjā naivedyam and money bags in the ımanṭapa. As on the Dipāvali day, the ceremonies are essed by the fifteen (Ālvārs and ācāryas), whose images are ght and kept opposite the Kili manṭapam. After pūjā, the almanac for the year is read out along with the order of ion, astronomical details, purāṇic geography, the genealogy ngs, etc., as preserved in a manuscript. Before retiring to sanctum, the God honours the Ālvārs and ācāryas in the manner as on the Dipāvali day.

The Ādibrahmotsava

This appears to have been the only Brahmotsava that was celebrated annually before the Vijayanagar period, the two s being called after Vijayanagar chieftains. It celebrates the s marriage with Uraiyūrvalli (Lakṣmī). The utsava starts eight

days before Uttira nakṣatra in the month of Panguni. The preliminaries like Ankurānpaṇam, Rakṣābandhanam, Bheritāṭanam, Dhvajārohaṇam gone through as usual and the sacrificial offering is made in the yāgaśala . The processions go round the Çitrā streets in the evenings. On the second day, the God is taken to a garden outside the temple in a palanquin. On the third day, he rides the horse vehicle to a garden in Jīyapuram near Śrīrangam. The next morning, he proceeds to the Garuḍa manṭapa where pūjā is offered. In the evening he comes out in the Çitra streets on the Garuḍa vehicle. The next day the God is taken to Uraiyūr, where he is supposed to have married the daughter of a Çola King. He stays in the temple there for the day and returns to Śrīrangam in the night in a palanquin decorated with flowers. The next day the God rides the elephant vehicle. On the seventh day the God and his consorts are taken in procession in the evening. In the night he is taken to the shrine of Śrīranga Nāççiyār, where abhiṣekam is offered. Then he is brought back to the sanctum. The next day he is taken on the horse vehicle to a garden in the east and is brought back to the sanctum in the evening, the procession passing through the Çitrā streets. On the 9th day i.e., the day of Panguni-Uttiram, the God is taken in procession early in the morning through the Çitra and Uttirā streets. He is then taken to the shrine of Śrīranga Nāççiyar and the Kalyāṇotsava or the wedding of the God and Lakṣmī is celebrated after tirumañjanam to both, in the Panguni Uttāra Tirukkalyāṇa-manṭapa. The Kalyāṇotsava has a crowded programme throughout the day and the night. First the praṇaya kalaham or the quarrel of the God and Goddess takes place . A few priests take the part of the Goddess and charge the God with neglect and infidelity, while a few others taking the part of the God come out with protestations. Finally reconciliation is effected and the images of the God and the Goddess are screened off i.e., they are let together (ekāntam), in the sanctum for sometime. They are brought out and seated together, in the decorated pavilion of the Kalyāṇa manṭapa i.e., on the same seat. In the meanwhile, the snānamūrti is taken to the river Kolliḍam for tirumañjanam and brought back. A goṣṭhi or gathering of Śrīvaiṣṇavas, then start reciting the Gadyatrayam recalling Rāmānuja's performance of Prapaṭṭi in the presence of the deities. According to the Lakṣmī Kāvyam of Uttamanambi Tirumalāçārya, a work of the 15th century, Rāmānuja addressed his çaraṇāgati gadyam of his Gadyatrayam to Lakṣmī and Ranganātha on this unique occasion and the deities are said to

have accepted his surrender and offered him abhaya. After this naivedyam is offered to the deities in camera. Then tirumaṇjanam is offered to the images of the Perumāl and Nāççiyār eighteen times. The deities are again screened off for naivedyam. By this time it would be early dawn. When the screen is drawn off the Nāççiyar is taken back to her sanctum while the God is taken to the chariot (Goratham) stationed in the East Çitrā Street.

The Kalyāṇotsava is of special significance because it is the only occasion throughout the year when the images of the God and the Nāççiyār are seated and worshipped together. The latter, popularly known as *paḍi tānḍa pattini,* i.e., 'the wife who has never gone beyond her threshold', is not taken out in procession in the streets along with the God, which privilege, however, is shared only by the two Goddesses, Śrī and Bhū.

On the tenth day the images of the God and the two Goddesses (Śrī and Bhū) are taken in the chariot round the Çitrā streets. In the evening, the God is given the tirumañjanam or abhiṣekam, yagna.This is referred to as the Avabṛta snānam,marking the culmination of the yagya - started in the yāgaśala on the first day. That marks the close of the festival. In the evening of the eleventh day the God is again taken round in a flower palanquin. Other ceremonies are the same as mentioned above while describing the Çittirai Brahmotsava.

THE ADHYAYANA FESTIVAL AT ŚRĪRANGAM

This is the singing of the Tamil hymns (The Vaiṣṇava canon) whose origin is more or less known . The meaning associated with the various movements of the deity is stated explicitly in the ritual. It is the longest festival in the temple calendar and attracts the largest crowd of the year. Its central feature is the chanting of the 4000 hymns; it serves the authority of the tenkalai school which introduced a tradition associated with the name of Rāmānuja.

This is a unique festival as a means of preserving and perpetuating the treasure of the devotional literature handed down by the Ālvārs. In Śrīrangam, it is celebrated in the following manner.

As we have seen the twenty one day span falls into two main parts and a one day foot note. During this period, the deity is taken from the sanctum to a different hall. There, in the presence of the Ālvārs' and ācāryas' images and hundreds of

ārcakas, the hymns are sung. For the second half, the deity is taken in procession out of his northern gateway and through the various hallways to the eastern portion of the Prākāra which is set in the thousand-pillared Mantapa, and is designed as a vast ratha. This hall is understood to be Vaikuṇṭha or heaven during this time. It is a general belief that the timings of the heavens are a reversal of those on earth, the second half of the chanting is done during the night time known as rāppattu or the Tiruvāimoli utsava. The one day foot note , known as Iyarpa consisting of 1000 hymns, is recited by a different family of the arçakas after the ceremonial return of the image into the inner sanctum of the temple at the end of the second ten day festival. The images of the Ālvārs and ācāryas are brought one by one from their respective shrines in the temple compound and are arranged along the end and two sides of the rectangle - facing the throne of the Lord as in modern seminars. The brāhmin families of the temple arrange themselves on the floor before these images. Finally, the arayars or the traditional chanters and actors enter and paying obeisance to the deity start their recitations which are formal chants of the memorised hymns with a steady beat of the cymbals. Three to five male members stand and chant in unison. In between, commentaries on the hymns are also presented with a highly formal dance, illustrating the theme of the hymn.

The images of Ālvārs and ācāryas are treated like a galaxy of mythological figures since they are authors of these songs. The crowd mills around during breaks in the recitation. Along with these images, those of Tirukaççinaṁbi Rāmānuja, Ālvān and Pillai Lokāçārya are also seated. "The selection here is a clear indication of the special interests of the Tenkalai priests. They probably use this festival to establish a close relationship between the Tamil hymnary and Rāmānuja. At any given opportunity the central role of Rāmānuja is brought out."

The deity, Nammālvār is in the centre of the far end -directly in front of the deity with Tirumañkai to his left and Rāmānuja to his right. At the end of the singing the image of the Lord is taken to the shrine of Rāmānuja to thank him for arranging the recitation. This is the chanting of Rāmānuja's Nurrantādi in praise of Rāmānuja by Amudanār.

Besides the religious importance, the organisation of this festival spells the importance of the hundreds of brāhmins who serve the temple and their honours; these people claim that they

represent the priestly lineage which were given tasks by Rāmānuja, so they receive honours in food, prasāda and lead in any procession. After the recitation has finished, the names of the different priestly families are called out and given the prasāda. Ranking at the top now are the various branches of the Bhaṭṭar family tracing their line to Ālvān, Vādūla Deśika, Āndān and Śrīranganātha Jeer appointed to carry on the Rāmānuja maṭha.

The final climax to the whole festival is when a senior member of one of the leading families is carried home in procession sometimes even preceded by the temple elephant. The special platform in which he is carried is known as Brahma Ratha.

Large crowds join the festival on relevant important episodes like the final liberation in the lines of the two Ālvārs which provides occasion for dramatic representation of these episodes.

The Vaikuṇṭha Ekādaśi draws a very large crowd. North and East are considered the divine realm and the gateways are thought to mark off the boundaries through which one moves from one cosmic realm to another. The opening of the northern gateway is an occasion on which the devotee is allowed to step out of this world into the transcendental realm. During the Avabhṛāta Snānam, the priests with delicate care, bathe the deity. People hasten to get into the sacred water immediately. This scene shows the soulabhya of the deity, he is so easily accessible to all.

The twentieth day is a fitting day for a popular event- Nammālvār's attainment of mokṣa. When there is great excitement in the air. After the recitation, the crowd becomes uncontrollable, the image of Nammālvār is carried from its usual place upto the throne of the deity on whose feet, the head of Nammālvār is placed. Hundreds of baskets of Tulsi leaves, cover the Ālvār's head.

This dramatisation is a theme of intimacy. It is not a mere ritual, the devotees are overwhelmed with the experience of the Ālvār and wish to imbibe him, in their quest for God.

THE BRAHMOTSAVA IN TIRUMALAI

This festival[89] is the most popular one drawing huge crowds. This is the basic festival supposed to have been commemorated

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89. Ramesan.

›y Brahmā himself according to the Varāha Purāṇa. In 966 A.D., he Pallava Queen Samavai arranged for the installation of the Bhoga Srīnivāsa Mūrti idol in the temple and made provision to conduct two Brahmotsava festivals. The later Çola records refer o the variety of food offerings during the festivals in the temple. By about the 1300 A.D., it became customary to perform this estival permanently. The Brahmotsavam was celebrated for a ›eriod of twelve days starting from the day of Ankurārpana Sowing of seeds of nine kinds). Each day after the procession vas over, the Utsava Mūrti was taken from the temple to a nanṭapa installed there - in an āsthāna and offered special pūjā ınd naivedya. On the day before the śravaṇa - star day, this ınkurārpana is done.

This is supposed to form a part of the propitiatory offerings o the celestials in the temple. A purnakumbham is also installed n he Yagasala. the festival commences on the very first day with he Dhwajarohana where the Lord's flag with the Garuda emblem s flown on a flag staff erected next to the Dhwajasthambha. Every day, the Utsavam is conducted with a grandiose fervour ılongwith the homam. The Lord's Utsavavigraham is taken in ›rocession twice. The vāhanas (Vehicles) are : first day - Big ›esşa vāhanam, second day - Hamsavāhanam, third day - Simha, ourth day - punyakoṭi vimānam fifth day - Garuḍa, Sixth day Elephant, Seventh day - Çandraprabhā, eight day -Aśva, ninth lay - Ivory palanquin, etc.. The important festival days are the ifth, eighth and the eleventh days. The utsavam on the night of he fifth day is called the Garuḍasevā. On this day, the Lord is ;iven another seva in the swing in the open air. Then the deity s taken and installed on the Garuḍa vehicle. The Makarakaṇṭhi ›rnament and the Lakṣmīhāram on the Mūla Vigraham are then ›rought and used for the decoration of the Lord in the Garuḍa. Then, the procession goes around East, West, North and South Maḍa streets of Tirumalai. The Lord, during the procession,enjoys ›araphernalia such as Ççhatra, Çāmara, Mangalavādya and recital ›f the Vedas. The car festival takes place on the eighth day. The ıtsava mūrti alongwith his consorts is brought on to the temple :ar early in the morning. Then it is taken round the streets of Tirumala and on the eleventh day of the festival, the deity is aken as Tiruççi Vāhanam to the Swami Puşkaraṇī. The discus of he Lord is then 'bathed' in the tank. At the same time, the

devotees also plunge themselves. A bath at this time is considered very holy. This is known as the Āvabhṛta Snāna.

THE ADHYAYĀNOTSAVAM

From the epigraphs, we learn that in Tirumala, this festival begins ten days prior to the Mukkoṭi Ekādaśi and it is continued for a period of about twenty days. The utsava mūrtis are taken out in the procession to the chanting of the 4000. The festival is divided into two parts, the earlier ten days is known as Pagal Pattu and the latter ten days as Irā Pattu. During this festival, the devotees provide naivedyam to the Lord during the Brahmotsavam. This festival was celebrated for Śrī Govindaraja also. For the five Ālvārs, they were observed for a period of twelve days and on the Śāttumurai day, special offerings were arranged for Lord Veṇkaṭesvara first and were then brought down to Tirupati for being offered to the Ālvārs. The earliest reference to this festival occurs about 1400 A.D. and the latest by 1635 A.D.. In the olden days, one Adhyayonotsavam was also performed in front of Śrī Rāmānuja for twelve days in the month of Çittirai. The Kalyāṇa Manṭapam was utilised for this purpose for housing the utsava mūrti of Malaiappan.

PAVITROTSAVAM

This is celebrated in all temples for the purpose of rectifying any omissions in the āgama injunction in the matter of festivals and pujas during the whole year. The meaning goes thus - the failure to follow the prescribed rules is to be redeemed.

Cotton or Silken Yarn dipped in turmeric water is placed on the deity which is known as Pavitra - āropaṇam. There might have been some deficiencies in the celebrations. Hence it is the annual atonement prayiscitta - A puṇyāhavāçanam is done everyday in some major temples. This is a simple ritual, but the annual Pavitrotsavam is very elaborate lasting for six days, in major temples. The Pavitrotsavam in Śrīīrangam is dealt with it great detail elsewhere in this chapter.

The Pavitrotsavam in Tirumalai[90] is mentioned for the first time in an inscription of 1464 A.D.. A Village Elambākkam was donated for Pavitrotsavam in the month of Āvaṇi. The deity is decorated with the pavitram garlands which, from a distance look

90. T.K.T.Veeraraghavacarya - History of Tiruvengaḍam,p.65.

ike a garland of beads. The continuous chanting of the Vedic ıymns and the reading of the purāṇas creates a halo round the ·ntire temple.

This purificatory festival is conducted on Śrāvaṇasuddha Daśami day - lasting for four days. The first festival was :onducted in 1463 A.D.. The deity Malai Kuniya Niṇḍra Perumāl ınd Nāççiyār are housed in the Tirumāmṇaṇi manṭapam, after ›utting on the pavitram (sanctified thread round the head, neck, vaist, etc.) and taken in procession through the streets.

ΓHE KALYĀṆOTSAVAM

This is the marriage of Śrī Malaiappan with his brides Śrīdevi ınd Bhūdevi. It begins with the Paṇçamūrti Pūjā according to the /aikhānasa āgama rituals. The Mangalasūtradhāraṇa is done ıccording to Vedic rites. The deities are then garlanded. This is ın ārjitam festival, one which is conducted on payment of the ıcheduled fees. All devotees in the temple are given the prasāda, he sacred Akṣata. This was probably started by Tallapākam Γirumalai Iyengar as a five day festival for Malaiappan on the ines of the Hindu marriage, in the month of Panguni.

ΓHE FLOAT FESTIVAL

During the hot weather, it was considered expedient by all he temple goers to take the processional mūrti and the Nāççimārs o a cool and airy spot like this manṭapam and after food offerings ıre made, the fully decorated deities are placed in a raft or Γiruppalli Odam and towed round thrice in the tank, with the ıccompaniment of music. Here the symbolic meaning goes thus the float is verily Ādiśeṣa, the couch and seat of Viṣṇu. No one ·xcept those actually in charge of rendering service to God, shall ıet foot on the float.In Tirumalai[91] this festival is mentioned for he first time in an inscription of the year 1468 A.D. (11. 31 - 16 3 - 1468).[92] In Tirupati, this festival is celebrated on one of the lays during the Brahmotsavams. It may be probably due to the act that the āgamas do not specify the definite date or occasion or this festival, and it must have been celebrated to suit the :onvenience of the donors. A grand description of this festival n Śrīrangam is given elsewhere in this chapter. A special feature

is the Sahasra Dīpa Darśanam or the Pandal Kāṭçi. Hundreds of torches are held by bearers in two rows providing an avenue for the Lord's procession, which moves between them.[93] It is a day's function being affixed to the Koḍai festival on its tenth day. As the āgamas do not specify any dates for these festivals, they came to be celebrated at the convenience of the management. Of late, with augmented income, the celebrations of these festivals have become very elaborate with a strict, enforced schedule. Besides these annual festivals there are many ārjitam festivals which can be conducted for scheduled fees, which are becoming extremely tight all over the year. The Lord with all his glory, reigns supreme and the temple has become the richest of all the temples of this sub-continent.

THE MELKOṬE BRAHMOTSAVAM
THE GRAND VAIRAMUḌI UTSAVAM

BHERITAḌANAM

The whole festival is a celebration of the Wedding of Śrī Sampat Kumārasvāmy and Śrī Kalyāṇi Tāyār. The Kalyāṇotsavam is conducted the previous day. The Lord ascends the Śamara Bhūpala Vāhanam, the flag is hoisted and with the beating of drums the heavenly deities are invoked.

The second day is the Śeṣa Vāhanam. The arayar sings the praise of the Lord swaying gracefully.

The third day is the Çandra Manḍala Vāhanam, sweet as the moon is the honeymoon of the Lord. Late night, he appears in the Çandra Manḍala Vāhanam, a huge silver ball shaped like the full moon.

The fourth day is of the famous Vairamuḍi or diamond crown and there is excitement and anticipation all round. Pilgrims come pouring in and the otherwise quite little town is suddenly overflowing with people. The Muḍi kept in the vaults of the Mandya district treasury is ceremonially brought and transferred to the temple for the day.

The procession starts around 10 P.M. and lasts until 3 A.M. In the free hours of the day, the Lord changes his Vairamuḍi for the Rājamuḍi - gemset crown with red and white stones.

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93. Hari Rao - op cit.

Regarding this festival, one is not very sure as to when it ,tarted, but traditional accounts weave a legend, a colourful egend about this most famous festival.

The story goes to the time of the Rāmāyana. It was)āśaratha's wish to coronate Rama, but due to unavoidable :ircumstances, Rāma was banished to the forest and Lakşmaṇa ook this to heart. In the Kaliyuga, Rāmānuja arrived on the 3hakti mileux as an avatār of Lakşmaṇa and he got fulfilled)aśaratha's wish by crowning Selvappillai with the Vairamuḍi.

Now, the significance and the genesis of the Vairamuḍi goes urther. This Muḍi or Kirita was not made by any goldsmith but n the Kritayuga, it was worn by Aniruddha and Viroçhana, the on of Prahlada coveted it into his Patālaloka. Garuḍa, :onquering Viroçana, took the Muḍi and was passing Mathura ınd watched Lord Kṛṣṇa wearing a peacock feather on his crown. ;aruḍa presented it to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who in turn placed it on the :rown of the family deity called Rāmapriya which was in turn ›resented to Lord Rāma by Brahma.

When Balarāma came on a pilgrimage to Yadugiri, the ›resent Melkote, he saw the mūlabera with exact resemblance to .ord Rāmapriya at Mathura and legend says the Vairamudi estival started thence.

There is no historical evidence for the above details, though he legend is colourfully woven into the cultural fabric over a ›eriod of years.

These festivals anyhow symbolise the truth and tenets of he Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy that God is supreme and though eal, matter and jīva are only a part of God and cannot attain ;odhood. The sentient and the non-sentient are the assets of the 3rahman. Here is a śloka which delineates this thought.

Viçitra Dvanda Viśāla Śrustehe
Çaitanya Bhedadi Vicitra Sahtehe
Asankhya Muktādi Vibhūti Sahtehe
Tvaprabhutvam makutīvyanārthi

There is no Lordship in the entire cosmos except that of he Great Brahman.

The significance of this festival is a peaceful revolution in his scientific age, when great strides have been taken by science, t is wise to ponder on the philosophy or the significance of

Vairamuḍi which has the power to usher in amity amongst discordant societies.

In these three days, it is said, that the harijans who helped Rāmānuja during his sojourn from Delhi, were given the privilege of the darśan of the Lord, even in the eleventh century, when society was rigidly caste ridden.

On the fifth day the Lord visits the various maṭhas and saṁsthānas and receives obeisance - Manṭapa-paḍi and in the afternoon He visits the Nandavanam of Ādivan Ṣaṭhakopan - the founder of the Ahobila Math and in the night he mounts the Garuḍa.

On the sixth day is enacted the famous episode of Gajendra Mokṣam - a Bhāgavata purāṇa episode and on this day He is mounted on the elephant.

The seventh day is the Rathotsava or the chariot ride. There is a Vedic recital accompanied by music and as a recognition of the services rendered by the Tirukkulattār, the Lord is handed over to them for Kaiṅkarya as they wish.

The eighth day is the Panguni Uttiram, Andal marrying the Lord Himself. The float festival is conducted in the Kalyāṇa Tīrtham followed by a swing function, Ḍolai after which He mounts the horse and is waylaid by Tirumankai to whom He divulges the sacred Aṣhtākṣari.

The next day is the Avabṛta Snānam, where the Lord with His devotees establishes the Bhagavat Bhāgavata link.

The tenth day starts with the bath of the Mūlavar, the Yāgaśāla is closed, the flag lowered and the Lord is worshipped twelve times.

The Mahānivedanam or the spreading of rice before both the Mūlavar and the Utsavar takes place (this spreading is known as Tiruppāvāḍai). This food is distributed among the devotees assembled.

Thus the great Brahmotsavam comes to a close, only to begin with the ensuing Koḍai Utsavam or the summer festival.

POST-RĀMĀNUJA PERIOD

LITERATURE

After establishing himself as a sanyāsin Rāmānuja began his teachings with Dāśarathi, his nephew and *Kūreśa*, his foremost disciples. In the meanwhile, Rāmānuja learnt certain esoteric doctrines and mantras from Goṣṭhipūrṇa and proceeded in course of time bringing up some eminent disciples and wrote his Gadyatraya. He then proceeded to the Śārada Maṭh in Kashmir in search of Bodhāyanavṛtti, a copy of which he was able to procure. But while proceeding to Śrīrangam, the keepers of the Kashmir temple intercepted him, took the work away. However, since *Kūreśa* had read the work thoroughly and remembered its purport, he repeated the commentary on the Brahmasūtra and eventually it emerged as the Śrībhāṣya, Rāmānuja also wrote the Vedāntadīpa, Vedāntasāra and the Vedāntasaṅgraha. Śrībhāṣya is believed to have taken long years in writing after his extensive tour all over the country. According to Rāmānuja Divyaçarita, Śrībhāṣya was completed in 1126 A.D. after his permanent return to Śrīrangam where he lived for eleven more years. During this time, Rāmānuja built many temples and maṭhas. His successor was Parāśara Bhaṭṭa, son of Kūreśa. While Yāmuna carried on the work of Nāthamuni who made popular - the 4000 hymns and arranged for their recitation in all temples, Rāmānuja gave further impetus to this. The tenkalai guruparamparā of Pin Palagiya Perumāl Jīyar, the disciple of Naṁpillai (century 1200 A.D.) mentions how Rāmānuja suggested his own interpretation for some of the hymns of the Ālvārs, when he was taught by Tirumalai Āṇḍān. Goṣṭhipūrṇa expressed his approval of Rāmānuja's interpretation. Rāmānuja had succeeded in securing a number of devoted scholars as his disciples who carried on his philosophy and forms of worship through the centuries. His spiritual son (Jnānaputra) was directed by him to compose the Maṇipravāla commentary on the Tiruvāimoli. This commentary has 6000 -32 (paḍis) words and hence known as Ārāyirappaḍi[1].

1. Paḍi is grantha, a group of 82 syllables, it is dificult to have granthas in prose, but the name is given, imagining 32x6000 words to constitute this commentary.

Nanjīyar, pupil of Parāśarabhaṭṭa, also wrote a commentary on Tiruvāimoli called the 9000. Periavāççānpilai, pupil of Naṁpillai, wrote the 24000. The 36000 called the Īḍu was prepared by Vaḍakkutiruvīdippillai. Thus, the line of teachers was interested in spreading the Tamil Prabandham among the people. Pillān's 6000 was an important step in the process of disclosing the secrets of salvation to the entire Śrī Vaiṣṇava community. He was the one who initiated the traditions of sanskritised Tamil commentary on the Tamil hymns, a tradition which became a hallmark of the southern school of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Pillān was in charge of both the Vedāntas, of sanskrit as well as the Tamil sources.

Though Rāmānuja was not the originator of the tradition, yet credit goes to him for having blended these traditions in the Śrīvaiṣṇava synthesis and enlarging this community from around the Vaiṣṇava temples to the whole country and also for introducing it to the double tradition of Sanskritic and Tamil Vaiṣṇava theism- the Ubhaya Vedānta which will be dealt with later.

For Śrīvaiṣṇavism, the first 130 years after Rāmānuja's death was a period of prolific and creative literary development which united the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta of Yāmuna and Rāmānuja with popular theism.

Rāmānuja is considered by Śrī Vaiṣṇavas to have finally established the tradition of Ubhaya Vedanta, which linked the piety of the Tamil Ālvārs to the authority of the Sanskrit Vedānta. The works of the first two generations of Rāmānuja's disciples demonstrate the synthesis of these two traditions and also mark the beginning of a new genre of literature with Śrīvaiṣṇavism commentaries on the 4000. These were written in Tamil, though infused with Sanskrit phrases from Rāmānuja's Vedānta constituting the literary examples of Tamil Maṇipravāla. While Nanjīyar and Pillān wrote in Maṇipravāla as a medium for developing Ubhaya Vedānta. Kurattālvān and Bhaṭṭar accomplished this with Sanskrit stotras. The 12th Century marks the influence of both Vedānta and the piety of the alvārs. A commentary on Viṣṇupurāṇa was written by Enkalālvān, Bhaṭṭar on Viṣṇu Sahasranāma, and the Aṣṭaśloki, elucidating the meaning of the three mantras (the Rahasyas). A later work was Tiruvarangattuamudanār's Rāmānuja Nurrandādi in praise of Rāmānuja.

While the āçāryas in Śrīrangam were writing commentaries and works in Maṇipravāla and also lecturing, prominent

preceptors in Kāñçi were concentrating on their effort to integrate Viśiṣṭādvaita vedānta with logic and Pāñcarātra. Their chief purpose was to defend Rāmānuja's philosophy against the advaitins' doctrines. With Periavaççānpillai, maṇipravāla became a grand vehicle for expounding the Vaiṣṇava doctrines.

Vatsya Varada: Among the Kāñcī āçāryas, Vatsya Varada (Naṭātūr Ammāl) wrote the Prameyamāla, Tattvaniyama and Tattvasāra. His Prapanna Pārijāta was based in the Pāñcarātra, which was imbibed by Vedānta Deśika in his doctrine of Prapatti. Vatsya Varada's prominent disciple Sudaraśana Sūri wrote the Śrutaprakāśika, a Sanskrit gloss on the Śrībhāṣya, Vedānta Saṁgraha and Gītābhāṣya. Thus, the northern school gave more importance to Sanskrit sources and the southern to Tamil scriptures. The Śrīrangam temple was the first shrine to incorporate the singing of the 4000 in the temple routine. The lectures given in the temple drew a large crowd from across the Vaiṣṇava Community and Rāmānuja's generosity in admitting the Śūdras into the Vaiṣṇava fold added to the devotional inspiration of the whole Vaiṣṇava Community. These discourses usually drew upon popular legends wherein different views and interpretations must have been accommodated.

The Kāñcī açāryas were called to debate by intellectuals of rival schools and their main purpose was to defend the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta with Pramāṇas against the rival system. In the beginning, these two systems were complimentary to each other, but later, differences between the two interpretations began manifesting in doctrinal differences.

Tiruvīdipillai's two sons, were Pillai Lokāçārya and Alakiya Maṇavālaperumāl Nayanār. The former wrote the Aṣtadasa Rahasyas, besides other works, the Śrī Vaçana Bhūṣana and the latter āçārya Hṛdayam.

1269 A.D.: During this time, Vedānta Deśika was getting groomed by Ātreya Rāmānuja. After spending some years in Tiruvahīndrapura, he went on several pilgrimages and began writing his philosophical works. He firmly established the Viśiṣṭādvaita doctrines and explained the supremacy of Prapatti for obtaining the full blessings of Nārāyaṇa. His brilliance as a great scholar in Sanskrit, Tamil and Prakrit shines forth in his works, numbering more than a hundred. His endowment of invaluable treasures includes stotras, rahasya granthas, commentaries, dramatic and kavya works. His polemic skills,

wide education and his familiarity with the views of the southern school were brought out in his writings. Anyway, all these dialogues came to an abrupt end with the Muslim invasion of Śrīrangam. Vedānta Deśika narrowly escaped to a safer place; he rescued the Śrutaprakaśika and Sūri's two sons, Pillai Lokāçārya while carrying the icon of Rañga, died enroute[2]. For sixty years, worship was suspended in Śrīrangam. A chieftian called Gopanarya drove out the Muslims and rededicated the temple in 1369. Deśika's two disciples were Nayana Āçārya and Brahma Tantra Svatantrajīyar (founder of the Parakāla Maṭha who popularised his works and established Deśika's worship in many temples. G.P.P. 145-151). In 1370 was born Maṇavāla Māmuni, who after having settled down in Śrīangam, conducted a lecture series on the Tiruvāimoli according to all the commentaries and composed Maṇipravāla commentaries on the works of the earlier āçāryas. He was also involved in temple renovation and administration in Śrīrangam. The period from Rāmānuja to Deśika roughly covered two centuries and was a critical period for Vaiṣṇavism, where the seeds of split were well established in the 15th and 16th centuries. There is no epigraphical evidence except the two sets of Guruparamparās. However, in the temple the Uḍayvar Tiṭṭam continued.

The polarisation of the ŚrīVaiṣṇava Community into two rival camps, however did not occur until several generations after Manavala Manuni. In course of time, he was recognised as the founder of the Tenkalai school (the southern) and a theological dispute arose over whether grace is given in co- operation with human effort. The southern school believes that God saves the soul like the mother cat carries the kitten. The northern school says that God saves the soul like the mother monkey carries its baby in that the baby co-operates with the mother in the process by holding on. These two differences were well rooted in the theological works of the Śrīvaiṣṇava āçāryas from the 13th to the 15th centuries. When the rift started about 1600 A.D., the Vadakalais chose the recitation of the Vedas but the Tenkalais preferred to recite the hymns of the ālvārs. Both recitations started at first in all temples without much distinction. But from the 17th century onwards, a schism developed, with the result that the two groups argued over the authority of the lineages of the āçāryas – with one playing Maṇavāla Māmuni and the other

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2. Koil Olugu - p. 130-135

Vedānta Deśika as their leaders. It must be noted that there is no indication of rivalry in any of the works of these two āçāryas. But after the death of Vedānta Deśika and Pillai Lokāçārya, the split between the Tenkalai and Vaḍakalai schools became more pronounced. The latter tradition was carried on by Varadāçārya, Brahmatañtrasvatañtra and their disciples. The Tenkalai position was definitely consolidated and established by Maṇavāla Māmuni. The split widened in due course and the laudatory verses recited in temple worship in praise of the leading āçāryas became the signal for this sectarian strife. Before we go into these differences, we should have a fuller knowledge of the themes, i.e. Bhakti, Gnāna and Prapatti. Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita is Vedāntic in the sense that it accepts the ultimate reality of a single supreme self-Brahman whose attainment is the supreme goal for the finite individual. This attainment does not mean the dissolution of one's individuality, but a perfection of it through communion with the supreme. The individual seeks his God in all His glory without losing his self-identity and finds his own true self lodged in the expanse of Godhead.

The hymns of the Puruṣasūktam identifies it with the supreme deity. This idea crystallises in the Upaniṣads with the concept of the supreme reality sustaining the totality of the universe. Thus, the Upaniṣads reiterate the view that the nature of humanity's highest goal and the ascent to this reality is through philosophical intuition. The process consists of listening and inquiring and studying the contents through philosophical criticism and contemplation. This path is best explained in the Gītā, which elaborates the definite concept of bhakti (devotion).

The Pāñcarātra provides the supplement by analysing the aspects of God-head and prescribes a disciplined routine. Rāmānuja inherited such a rich source for his Vedānta. For him, the essence of spiritualism is bhakti, which is love generated and sustained by the knowledge of God.

BHAKTI AND PRAPATTI

The cult of Bhakti is as ancient as the Ṛg Veda. The word bhakti means service. When a person becomes intoxicated with God - consciousness, he is said to be in a state of bhakti. All his faith goes to please God, who is the basis of all actions of the devotees. Śāṇḍilya defines it as deep attachment to God; Nārada

.s deep love of God. Paṭanjali calls it Pramidhāna[3] of the five ›ractices of spiritual discipline[4].

Rāmānuja defined bhakti as contemplation of God, longwith love[5] . The Brahman is lovely and for that reason, ontemplation is sweet[6]. Thus for Rāmānuja, bhakti is ontinuous and deep meditation of the beloved in which the levotee sees God, face to face. This experience is a permanent liss. Meditation deepens into bhakti and it is the practice of 3hakti that becomes the direct pathway to the Brahman.

Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita, as a systematic and self- contained ›hilosophy of religion sees no difference between the absolute ›hilosophy and the God of religion and blends logic with religious eeling. His means to release is a combination of knowledge, ıction and meditation.

Rāmānuja uses the term "Bhakti Yoga" in the sense that he manas should be firmly fixed on the Ātman alone[7]. Having :xcluded the outward desires for objects, sitting with the body traight in posture, the buddhi, manas and senses become ncapable of turning away except towards seeing the ātman - ›ne-point Ékāgra[8] which is known as Dhāraṇa.

Rāmānuja gives several reasons why Brahman should be the ›nly object in dharaṇa. According to him, the purāṇas state that He is the essence of purity, without imperfection - full of ıuspicious qualities[9].

Supreme devotion according to Rāmānuja is the result of :nowledge arising from love. Besides parabhakti and para gnāna, Rāmānuja admits even paramabhakti and places them in the ollowing order.

(1) Parabhakti - the primary love of God in man makes him inquisitive.

(2) Paragnāna - is perfect knowledge. Both culminate in paramabhakti. Bhakti is its supreme form is characterised by Rāmānuja as the realisation, the unceasing perception

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Bharadwaj - The Philosophy of Rāmānuja. p. 169
Yogasūtram - 2.24
Gītā Bhāṣya - 6.2
Vedānta Saṅgraha - 62.
Gītā Bhāṣya - 62
ibid - 6.14
Heyapratyaṅka - Kalyṇṇa Guṇagānam

of God[10]. Such a devotion - Rāmānuja draws this view from the teachings of Yāmunāçārya[11].

Bhakti is a matter of human effort[12] . Man has to engage and dedicate himself to God and prays to get the necessary power to know Him[13].

Rāmānuja asserts that God protects all, irrespective of differences. A man of devotion is honoured as a perfect Vaiṣṇava[14]. "Even if a person of the most wicked ways exclusively worships God, he is to be regarded as a saint, for he has resolved rightly. To Rāmānuja, the worship of God destroys the sins of a vicious person and even he goes to the eternal state from where there is no return[15]. This view is probably based on the scriptures. According to Bhardwaj, Rāmānuja also had made stray reference to Navavidha Bhakti.

i) Yātana or building of temples

ii) Sravaṇam - listening to His attributes

iii) Kīrtanam or the recital of the Divine names

iv) Arçana or worship

v) Stuti - hymnal recital

vi) Varaṇa - discourse

vii) Smaraṇa - remembrance

viii)Meditation or Dhyāna

This goes to show that the aforesaid non-meditative expressions of bhakti are legitimate though subordinate to yogic meditation, i.e., it becomes sort of a personal involvement. Bhakti consists in changing self-centredness into God centredness, i.e., from the sensual to the spiritual. For Rāmānuja, 'devotion to God is a sure means of attaining the ultimate God and Bhakti results in God's realisation.

If the Gītā says, "He who serves God with unlimited devotion and comes or crosses over the guṇas of Prakṛti and

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10. Bharadwaj - op. cit. p.176
11. Vedānta Saṁgraha - op. cit. p.246
12. Bharadwaj - op. cit. p.177
13. Gita Bhasya - op. cit. 24.26
14. Gita - 6.30
15. Gita Bhasya - 6.32

attains the state of perfection [16]. This devotional service, according to Rāmānuja is Brahmavidyā.

On the cult of Bhakti (15) : Rāmānuja recommends seven means to a man of devotion[17].

(1) Vivēka of food. Man's mental make-up depends upon his food.

(2) is Vimōka - giving up desires for sensual enjoyment. A man of devotion should rise above the woes of sex instinct.

(3) is the practice of concentration of mind (Abhyāsa).

(4) performance of Kriyā - the five daily sacrifices.

a) study of religious books

b) offering oblations to Gods.

c) sharing food with animals

d) hospitality to guests.

The importance of these is stressed by the Brahmasūtras and Gītā according to Bharadvaj. The other means stressed is the cultivation of virtues like compassion, equanimity, non-injury and forgiveness. The sixth is non-dejection. For a man of devotion, his mind rests undisturbed, while he is overtaken by misfortune.

The seventh is the absence of elation (anudarśa). A true man of character is not carried away by any allowing offers.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, Rāmānuja recommends an elaborate preparation for the cult of Bhakti, a vital link between two spheres of activities - philosophy and pragmatic. In his Nityagrantha, Rāmānuja recommends five time worship.

(1) Abhigamana - approach to God in a temple or at home - This is proceeded by ablution and oblation.

(2) is Upādāna - Collection and arrangement of articles for worship.

(3) Ijya or service - adoration of the deity by Upaçāras. In offering all kinds of pleasing objects to God.

(4) Svādhyaya or study - Counting the Divine names, chanting the holy hymns and reciting the religious texts.

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16. Gita - 26.26
17. Śrī Bhasyam - 1.2.2

(5) Yoga - concentration on the Deity.

A study of this work shows a blend of metaphysics with religion. As he goes to explain the method of worship to the Paramaikāñtin, to whom God is the only goal, Yāmuna and Vedānta Deśika explain the Nitya grantha in their respective treatises (16).

A devotee should pin his life on the Brahman. His duty is to sing the glory of God. He must deploy all his sense organs only to His service. The whole content of this work has 15 tiers to its credit.

(i) the bath

(ii) the Abhigamana - with Bhūtaśuddhi, one's body is made up of five elements, hence the worshipper disintegrates the body mentally into its five elements and purify it with mañtras. Then mental worship starts with asking for forgiveness for any lapse. Then the cups are arranged and permission is sought from Ādiśeṣa and Dvārapālakas. Then starts the ārādhana. The Lord is given a ceremonial bath with chanting of Puruṣasūkta.

Then ārçana is performed followed by an offering alongwith the chiming of the bell. Concluding the worship, Upaniṣads and Prabhanda are chanted, which is known as Sattumarai. Then the Lord is conducted to His couch.

Now the tīrtha and other prasadams are distributed. All are eligible to perform this kind of worship irrespective of caste.

The word Yoga had a special meaning for Rāmānuja, who after careful scrutiny of the Vedas, Kalpasūtras, Upaniṣads and the Āgamas called the Pūjā as Yaga. After all this, one must perform Satturka Tyāga, which consists of Svarūpa, Kartṛtva, Phala Tyāgas - thereby the ego vanishes and one becomes the servant of God. The essential principles of the Gītā are incorporated here to guide a divine life. All devotees are elevated from a mundane to a higher plane.

On Prapatti :In this mundane world man hardly finds real happiness. Thus, to free himself from worldly life, he assumes a new outlook, an attitude of surrender and seeks the protection of God from the misery of the world, i.e. a complete resignation to the will of God. The devotee finally wins God's compassion and attains emancipation from all evils. This doctrine is known

as Saranāgati or Prapatti, which is supposed to be as old as the vedas.

The Svetaśvatara Upaniṣad says *"Who in the beginning created Brahma and furnished Him with the Vedas - to that deity, I surrender myself with a desire for salvation"*. The word Śaranāgati is peculiar to Pāñcarātra literature and the Vaiṣṇava āçāryas used it profusely. The words Śaraṇam prapadyé[18] Mām prapadyañte[19] Śraṇamgaçç[20] araṇam vraja[21] denote the act of resignation. The word "saraṇa may firstly mean to denote, a person becoming free from all suffering; secondly, the act of seeking refuge; thirdly, it implies the person in whom the refuge is sought. Here, the individual soul discovers that God is the ultimate end of realisation and the means to it also lies through God[22]. The Gītā summons the whole world to renounce the duties and take refuge at the feet of the Lord who offers salvation. Bhakti, though a desirable means to mukti cannot be practised easily owing to its arduousness. On the other hand, prapatti preserves the essentials of Bhakti and is a direct means to mōkṣa. Its only requisites are the devotee's absolute confidence in the grace of the saviour and self-surrender. Prapatti asserts that the Lord seeks the Prapanna or devotee and draws him to Himself. This act destroys even the prārabhdha (karma). It has a universality of appeal to all irrespective of class and caste, since it brings salvation to all jīvas who cannot undergo the tenets of bhakti.

The three gadyas of Rāmānuja are taken as a model of complete surrender to the mercy of God, which became the accepted approach for a Śrī Vaiṣṇava for generations after Rāmānuja. This act of surrender became one of the major points of dispute between the northern and southern schools in later years.

The Saraṇāgatigadya is a dialogue between Rāmānuja on the one side and the Lord and His consort on the other side. Rāmānuja surrenders to Śrī and prays for her blessings, which is followed by a brief favourable response from Her. He entreats the Lord for forgiving the prapanna's sins and asks for higher devotion. The last part speaks of the Lord's granting of the boon.

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18. Svétasvatara Upaniṣad
19. Gītā
20. ibid
21. ibid
22. Gītā Bhāṣya

this gadya is again a prayer of surrender at the feet of Ranganatha to be accepted as an eternal servant (nityakiṅkara).

The Vaikuṇṭhagadya is a detailed expression of Vaikuṇṭha - the eternal abode of Viṣṇu, on which one is to regularly meditate after he has performed prapatti. It is a spiritual discipline in asking for God's grace to accomplish His salvation. This gadya contains 'Maṅgalaślōka' or the auspicious verse in praise of Yamuna and is modelled on Yāmuna's Stōtraratna.

Later Śrī Vaiṣṇavas have held that in the gadyas, Rāmānuja has clearly expounded the doctrine of Prapatti, i.e., a person will be saved only if he surrenders to God, inspite of the fact that he has not practised Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti yogas. The gadyas form a link between Rāmānuja's philosophic writings and the later development in the Vaiṣṇava school. Rāmānuja's two interpretations of the 'çaramaślōka' of the Gītā reveal an understanding of surrender[23] which is not different from the position of the gadyas.

The doctrine of Prapatti or ñyāsa is described in Ahirbudhnya Saṁhita as a prayer for God's help -one's absolute dependence on God associated with a sense of helplessness. (8) The word ñyāsa renouncing is here understood (as Otto Shrader puts it) in the sense of bhakti[24], the six constituents of which are defined as taking refuge (Śaranāgati), the prayerful thought *"I am a receptacle of sins, helpless and you are my remedy (Upāya) Oh Lord ! who art invisible through the all conquering thousand spokes of thy discus, I am taking refuge in thee"*. This refuge implies all austerities, pilgrimages, sacrifices and charities, because it is self-sacrifice. The devotee meditates on God as if it were a sacrifice, His body the altar, his mouth, the Āhavāniya fire, His heart the southern fire and the enemies of His devotees the sacrificial animals, His sixteen arms the priest's compassion and sacrificial gift- giving a warning to the kings not to neglect the Sudarsana worship.

In defining a Prapanna or seeker of God, some think that a mere study of the Prabandhas cannot make a man qualified for 'prapatti'. He should give up all duties, both spiritual as well as temporal. Prapatti implies the negation of all knowledge, excepting one's self-surrendering association with God.

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23. J.B. Carman - Theology of Rāmānuja, Bombay, 1981, p.215
24. Otto von Shrader - Ahirbudhānya Saṁhita, Chapter 37, p.147

The accessories to 'prapatti' are as follows: (1) a positive mental attitude to keep in consonance with God's will (*Ānukūlyasya sañkalpa*) (2) a negative mental attitude (*pratikūlyasyavarjanam)* of opposing anything that may be conceived against His will (3) a supreme trust that God will protect him (*raksyatīti viśvasa*) (4) prayer to Him as a saviour *goptṛtva varṇanam* (5) complete surrender (6) a sense of complete helplessness - *Karpaṇyam.*

NATURE AND MEANS OF SALVATION PRAPATTI

	VAḌAKALAI	TENKALAI
1)	Karma, Jñāna, Bhakti are valuable for salvation. They are all created and bestowed by God Himself	These have no value as compared to Prapatti, since God Himself has taught so.
2)	There is no difference in the result of attaining salvation between approved paths and between kinds of devotees.	Prapatti alone leads to salvation and not self-effort The essence of prapatti is abandonment of self effort.
3)	For prapatti dharma, karmas of karmakāṇḍa which have been enjoined by God should never be abandoned.	Abandonment of dharma, karmas is absolutely necessary as ordained finally by God.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava scholars, in recent years have tried to determine whether bhakti or prapatti were clearly distinguished as two separate paths to mōkṣa at the time of Rāmānuja. But by the time of Naṭātūr Ammāl and early Śrīrangam āçāryas the distinction between these through Upāyas had been accepted by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava Community.

Prapatti, a simple surrender as Upāya for mōkṣa is documented in the alvār's hymns, the epics and the purāṇas and in the Pāñcarātra. It is one view that Prapatti is one upāya, which the earlier āçāryas like Yāmuna and Rāmānuja practised themselves and taught privately to their disciples.

Thus arose some points of dispute among the two schools. The topic being bhaktiyoga as an upāya and the condition under

which it should be given up in favour of prapatti. The difference is brought out in the interpretation given for the dictum *Śarva darmān paritdyajya, māmékam Śaraṇam vraja*. This word, though it presupposes redemption and the expression of causeless grace, (Nirhétuka Kṛpa) reiterates at the same time - the fact that grace needs a vyāja and it cannot take place in a soil of hostility.

The Rāmāyaṇa is taken as a text book of practical religion and is known in Vaiṣṇava parlance as Abhayapradāna sāram. Paratattva or the transcendental Brahman that incarnated into this world is the saviour. Śaraṇāgati is universal salvation (paramahita) the end, Puruṣārtha is kaiṅkarya or service. The whole Rāmāyaṇa spreads the theme of forgiveness for all who seek refuge at the Lord's feet. The epic contains several episodes of Ahalya, Kākāsurā and Vibhīṣaṇa to illustrate the point.

The secret doctrines called the rahasyas (the Mūla, Dvaysa and the Çaramaśloka) contain the essence of Prapatti, wherein the saviour is the means and His grace is not conditioned by the law of karma. The Bhāgavata's worth is not governed by his social status. This is the Tengalai view. But in the other school, Brahman is self-realised and is the siddhōpāya. The devotee or the mumukṣu seeks the grace of God through bhakti and prapatti, (1) Prapatti can be undertaken by (1) those who have the general knowledge of this means (2) those who do not have the ability to perform other upāyas.

Bhakti yoga is unsuitable : (1) for those not in the upper three varṇas (2) who lack knowledge or ability (3) those who have strong anguish that they cannot bear the delay. For Vedānta Deśika, bhakti yoga is not a valid upāya but only a provisional means for mōkṣa.

In the content of the Gītā, Vedānta Deśika interprets the Çaramaślōka as a reference to Arjuna's helplessness and when Kṛṣṇa recognises Arjuna's eagerness for the goal, he immediately teaches Prapatti, dispels Arjuna's fear by proclaiming the Çaramaloka as an easy and fast way to attain the Lord. In toto Vedānta Deśika defends prapatti as a saṅgamasthāna, enjoined in the śāstras as necessary to propitiate the Lord who immediately grants salvation. In his Ṅyāsa Daśaka, Vedānta Deśika sums up the whole process - *"Lord I who am nothing, conform to your will and desist being contrary to it and with prayer submit to you the burden of saving my soul"*.

On points of dispute, we find the southern school's appeal is to popularise the Ālvār's hymns. Vedānta Deśika invokes specific injunction from the dharma śāstras as the highest authority. For Deśika, Ālvār's devotion is not to be taken as normative when they are conflicting with the śāstraic injunction of the varṇāśrama dharma. In Ācārya hṛdaya śāstra followers are compared to those who cross the river by swimming and holding on to the raft, while followers of tirumanñra are said to cross effortlessly.

The southern school made use of the popular legends and analogues to illustrate their themes with a wide range of doctrinal interpretation to get the message across. Deśika articulated the Śrīvaiṣṇava doctrines on authority from Sanskrit texts and logical thinking, striving to correct the inconsistencies; he steered the course of the Rāmānuja saṁpradāya with deftness.

The differences between these two modes - the southern school's preacherly style and the northern school's scholarly argumentation came to bear on all points of dispute which are given in detail below.

It is held that the two schools headed respectively by Pillai Lokāçārya and Vedānta Deśika differed from each other on eighteen points. These are as follows : (L : Lokāçārya, V : Vedāntadeśika).

1. L.Compassion of the Lord is uncaused. The Lord is an embodiment of grace and so his grace does not depend upon anything to become the cause for its display.

   V. It is caused, otherwise God must be charged to have partiality and heartlessness. God has to take note of the good deeds done by the soul and then show his compassion.

2. L.Result (phalam) - mokṣa is the result desired by the selves. This result is for God alone and not for the self. Phala is taken to mean service (kaiṅkarya), the enjoyer of this is God, as the servant does not have a share in it.

   V.Service rendered to God is certainly intended to please Him, but the self which renders that service cannot be completely unaffected by the result. So phala accrues to God and self.

3. Anyagati - adoption of a means to get mōkṣa and this means shall be other than prapatti.

   L.Karma, Jñāna, Bhakti and Prapatti are the means.

   V.Bhakti alone is the other means.

4. **Place of Śrī**

   L.Śrī is a Jiva, atomic in size.

   V.Śrī is all pervasive.

5. Śrī as the means of mōkṣa.

   L.Śrī cannot be the means. Bhagavan alone can grant the result. She can be the puruṣakāriṇi (matrix) but cannot herself offer the result.

   V.Śrī is as much upāya as the Lord is.

6. Vātsalya - Tenderness.

   L.It consists in treating the defects or sins of the souls as admissible for His enjoyment. That is, the Lord is happy that the self has become faulty or sinful sinner.

   V.It consists in God's not taking serious note of the sins or defects of the self.

7. Dayā - Pity

   L. It consists in His grieving when a soul grieves.

   V. It consists in not being in a position to keep quiet when another is in distress; although this is not going to fulfill anything.

8. Ñyāsa - self-surrender

   L. Prapatti need not be adopted for undertaking it as a means to get Mokṣa.

   V.It is to be undertaken as a means.

9. Tatkarta - agent of prapatti

   L. Those who do not have enough faith in devotion and others are fit for prapatti.

   V. One who has no means for saving himself is qualified for prapatti.

10. Dharma Tyāga - Abandoning of dharma

L. All duties - nitya (obligatory) and naimittika (conditioned) are to be abandoned, as they are concerned with Gods other than Viṣṇu.

V. Even those who had surrendered themselves to God have to attend to the nitya and naimittika duties.

11. Virōdha - contradiction

L. For a Vaiṣṇava, it is objectionable to take to any other means, as it is opposed to his nature. That is, even upāsana, attendance on god through meditation and other means is to be avoided.

V. Upāsana is not opposed to the person who has surrendered himself to god. The correct knowledge of God is declared in Vedānta as essential for the self. Thus there is no contradiction whatsoever.

12. Ñyāsāṅga - Limbs of prapatti

L. The self shall attend to any limb of ñyāsa. (The limbs are 1. will to do that which is enjoined in the scriptures. 2. Avoidance of what is prohibited. 3. Conviction that the Lord will protect. 4. Appeal to God to become the saviour. 5. Helplessness on the part of the self to take to any other means - Act of self- surrender).

V. All the aṅgas are necessary.

13. Svāvihita - personal obligation

L. Duties that are enjoined for varṇa and āṣrama are to be abandoned by one who has become a prapanna. They are however to be done for maintaining the progress of the world.

V. The duties that are enjoined have to be gone through to avoid not doing the obligatory ones . Thereby God is pleased.

Ñyāsāṅgas - auxiliary parts of prapatti

L.Person who is seeker of mōkṣa, cannot have any personal ambition to be fulfilled. He can attend to the auxiliary parts as and when necessary and not compulsorily.

V.The auxiliary parts have to be attended to.

14. Hetutva - efficacy of prapatti

L. Bhagavān is the cause for granting mōkṣa and prapatti is not the cause for it.

V.Both God and prapatti are the causes. Prapatti does become the cause.

15. Prayasçittavidhi - expiatory act

L. One who is a prapanna is likely to become a sinner voluntarily too. this does not require the performance of the expiatory act to overcome the sin. God's pardon plays the role of the expiatory act. Hence no expiatory act need be taken up. Or, recollecting the idea of prapatti would serve the purpose of the expiatory act.

V. In such cases, expiatory act must be undertaken. One who is not in a condition to take up the act of expiation can do prapatti again.

16. Tadīyabhajanam - honour or respect to those who are Bhagavatas.

L.Non-brāhmins who are devotees of god should be respected even by brāhmins.

V. They are to be respected but should be appeared by treated them as belonging to their group. One should not frown upon them. Gentle and compassionate looks, benedictory utterances and talks are to be employed towards them. Such acts shall not violate the rules of the śāstras.

17. Anubyapti - pervasion into the atomic.

L. The self is of the size of the atom. God enters it. This happens because as God can do what others can not do at all.

V. God's pervasion into the atomic sized soul means that God is connected with all the ten directions, (four quarters, like south east etc. and above and below, that means that there is no space in between them not pervaded by god and thus God is also within the atomic sized soul.

18. Kaivalya - Solitude

L. Solitude means experience of one's own self without any relationship to others. This is to be had in the region of release Paramapada.

V. Such an explanation would mean kaivalya could be had only in the mundane world and so this condition becomes perishable. Therefore, this cannot be the nature of mōkṣa.

L. Represents the view of the school which preferred to the taking up of the study of the Ālvār's hymns.

V. Represents the school which attached importance to both the Śrībhāṣya and Prabandha traditions. This sectarianism based on the eighteen differences between the two schools developed from about 1200 A.D.

In the concluding part of the book we may discuss the present position of the temple with its discussion and disputes during the 13th century in their own way, however, the āçāryas of the two schools sought only to promote the integrity of the ŚrīVaiṣṇava faith by following the tradition of Rāmānuja's Ubhayavedānta, the knowledge of which should be of great interest to us.

UBHAYA VEDĀNTA

The first two chapters of the Vedānta Sūtras form a metaphysical enquiry into the nature of sat as the supreme tattva or saguṇabrahman. The third nature of hita as bhakti and prapatti and the last the meaning of puruṣaārtha or the attainment of Brahman. The supreme end of man's spiritual quest yields a special experience. That the Bhagavat Viṣaya of Nammālvār embodies the practical aspect of this spiritual experience goes to prove that Viśiṣṭādvaita is Ubhayavedānta. P.N. Śrīnivasaçarya makes a note of that Brahman's nature as his svarupa, kalyāṇaguṇas and rūpa, paratva and divyamañgala vigrahatva of the Vedāntasūtras and equates the absolute of the Upanisad to Nārāyaṇa, the redeemer and Śrīnivasa. He also notes that the first and third satakas of the Tiruvāimoli have a striking resemblance. There are some other references to this point of view in subsequent works like Āçārya Hṛdayam of Alagiya Maṇavālapperumāl Nayanar etc.

The substance of this work goes thus - Tiruvāimoli is one of the four works of Nammālvār. These four are considered to be the four Vedas. Tirumañgai, who came after Nammālvār, contributed six works known as the six *añgas*. The works of the other eight Ālvārs are said to be eight *upāṇgas* of the Vedas. Since the eternal truth blossoms into full form in Nammālvār alone, it

is known as aṅgī (whole), the rest being aṅgas. Their hymns are also held on an equal footing with all the Śāstras. They contain all the special features attributed to the Sanskrit Vedas, which are (1) Śāstraic character (2) commands of the Lord (3) blemishlessness (4) haveing been handed down from generation to generation (5) truthful and eternal.

The Tiruvāimoli is equated with the Sāma Veda. While the Vedas speak of the svarūpa and jīva of the Brahman, the śāstras take only one aspect of the Brahman as their main object of description. The Pāñcarātra mainly describes the svarūpa and jīva of the Lord. the purāṇas speak of the vibhūtis and the Tiruvāimoli describes the Arça form of God. So they are known as upabhaṅgas or explanation treatises.

Thus it is shown that the logical high point of what may be called pure Viśiṣṭādvaita of the Sūtras is also the highest of the practical Viśiṣṭādvaita of Bhagawat Viṣaya where the Brahman is enquired into as well as experienced. Jñāna is inspired by Bhakti and the two constitute *bhakti rupéṇa dhyāna*. Rāmānuja as a mystic and a philosopher integrated the experience of the Ālvārs and ṛṣis and expounded them as one single concept called the Ubhaya Vedānta.

Though Rāmānuja formulated Viśiṣṭādvaita, he was not its founder. The truths handed down traditionally by the ṛṣis and Ālvārs are embodied by the system of Ubhaya Vedānta. It is not an amalgam of two different cultures, but it is a synoptic philosophy to seek knowledge of the Brahman.

The hymns of the Ālvārs were collected and collated by Nāthamuni, who is actually the founder of the Ubhaya Vedānta school. He made the recitation of the Prabandhas an integral part of temple worship at Śrīrangam and other shrines. This movement effected a silent revolution in temple worship by raising the status of the Prabandhas to that of the Vedas. the next in line of the ācāryas stands Yāmuna, the grandson of Nāthamuni. Besides his other works, the Gītārtha Saṁgraha consists of thirty ślōkas on the nature of prakṛti purusa and Puruṣōttama and the need of Bhakti and Prapatti as the means for mōkṣa, which concept was later developed by Rāmānuja and Deśika, respectively. The different works of Rāmānuja, especially the Gītābhāṣya, explains the importance of Bhakti to achieve salvation. Thus the dream of Alavandar to formulate Viśiṣṭādvaita was accomplished by Rāmānuja's synthetic genius. Besides the writings of the āçcāryas

of the southern school, the main contribution was of Vedānta Deśika. He elucidated the Viśiṣṭādvaitic teachings of Rāmānuja by establishing in the Vedāntic manner the truths of Ubhaya Vedānta and the value of prapatti[25] - with the central idea of Brahman as śārīri, he pointed out the essentials of scriptural knowledge in his Rahasyatrayasāra and explained the Upaniṣads in terms of the Divyaprabanhda and vice-versa. Moreover, he bridged the gulf between Bhakti and Prapatti. He preferred the works of Nammālvār to the Upaniṣads owing to former's spiritual appeal.

The Bhagavat Viśaya or Tiruvāimoli of Namālvār is a logical exposition of Vedānta just as Śrībhāśya elucidates the Vedāntic experience found in the Śūtras. Vedāntic ethics deal with hita[26] as a means of realising tattva. The puruṣarārtha or the end is the realisation and attainment of eternal bliss. Bhakti and Prapatti are the means of attaining Brahman. The first two chapters of the sūtras determine the nature of tattva. The third defines the hita and the fourth, the puruṣartha. In the same way the first section of Tirūvāimoli deals with meditation on tattva. The second describes hita or upāya and the last sections the puruṣārtha. The commentaries on the Bhagavad Viśaya give a logical account of the divine life of the Ālvārs. The first of the two insists on service to God as the main aim of life. The second section establishes that kaiṅkarya is only for His satisfaction. The third section gives an extended meaning of kaiṅkarya which consists of bhāgavata kaiṅkarya, or service to all godly men, irrespective of their birth. The fourth section traces the way to divine life. The fifth says that the Lord Himself removes the hindrances. The sixth defines prapatti. In the seventh, a feeling of dejection sets in. The eighth is an introversion and an increase in the hunger for God. But this dejection changes itself with hope and longing. The tenth section gives an account of the Ālvār's ascent to His divine home.

Deśika was deeply influenced by the Tiruvāimoli. If the Upaniṣadic Vedanta is the enquiry into the Brahman as the first cause of all, the Dramiḍa Vedānta has its primary aim as the experience of the Brahman. The whole teaching of the Tiruvāimoli is given in his Dramiḍōpaniṣadsāra, which is unsurpassed in mystic literature for its spiritual depth. Both the Dramiḍōpaniṣadsāra and Dramiḍōpaniṣad Tāttparya Ratnāvali

25. P.N. Śrīnivasaçarya - Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita, p.530
26. P.N. Śrīnivasaçarya - ibid, p.432

define the Brahman as beautiful and blissful, and say that on unconditional surrender, the Lord shows his love for the devotee and helps him ascend to Vaikunṭha, thereby Brahman is Himself the prāpaka and prapya, as well as the upāya and upéya.

The opening verse of the Tiruvāimoli delineates the philosophy of the Vedas in a nutshell. The central truth of Viśiṣṭādvaita in the light of Tattva, Hita and Puruṣārtha and the five-fold Artha Paṇçaka is well brought out here. It describes the supreme tattva like the Taittrīya and hita as indicated by the word matinalam. Uyarnalam is the transcendental bliss.

Toludu indicates absolute self-surrender to the saviour, who Himself is the upāya and upéya. Similarly, the devotee is blessed with Tuyarvaru (mukti). Higher knowledge is summarised in the praṇava, made of the three letters of the first three lines of the first verse, where Nammālvār summarises the teachings of the thousand verses and the truths of Śarīrāka Śāstra. It gives in a nutshell the central truth of Viśiṣṭādvaita for Śrīvaisṇavas.

To produce a condensed work in Tamil for Śrīvaiṣṇavas, Śrī Vedānta Deśika summarised the entire Four thousand. This is known as Prabandha Sāram, a reference work for posterity on the exact number of verses by each Ālvār, adding upto the total collection. The essence of his effort lies in the message that these verses enlighten us about the devotional content of the four thousand verses for our own edification and spiritual progress. He called the hymns 'Tamil Vedas' and named himself 'Tamil Maraiyon', the one belonging to the tradition of the Tamil Vedas blessed by Ālvārs. In fact, it is said he settled the matter of the sanctity and hoariness of the Ālvār's works at Kāṇçīpuram and Śrīrangam where the Adhyayana festivals were interrupted during the recitation of the Four thousand verses. Legend says that he was rewarded by Śrī Varadarāja of Kāñcī and Śrī Ranganātha of Śrīrangam for his efforts to establish the paramount importance of the Four thousand.

The ṛṣis and the Ālvārs realised the Brahman by experiencing Him and proved that He is the highest. Jñāna is inspired by bhakti and bhakti is determined by Jñāna, the two together constitute bhaktirupapanna jñāna, this is anubhava and this truth was established by Rāmānuja, who expounded the experiences of the ṛṣis and the Ālvār as one single whole which is Ubhaya Vedānta. According to him, each adhikaraṇa was a Brahmānubhava, so also were the truths of the Tiruvaimoli

logically coherent with anubhava[27]. [28]The topics of the Tiruvāimoli are outlined in stanza 118 of Deśika's Drāviḍōpaniṣad Tātparya Ratnāvali "Nammālvār in his Veda revealed everything to be understood in the Śāstras : (1) The Ātman (soul) is different from déha (body). The Lord is the ruler; the upāya (means) to obtain his grace and His supreme abode; sinning against Him is cause for tapa; the glory of His devotees; and following them can remove the confusion in the heart. According to Deśika, the Tiruvāimoli contains the quintessence of all the śāstras.

To sum up, we may say, while Rāmānuja entrusted his spiritual kingdom at the close of his life, he got written the authoritative gloss called the *six thousand* on the Tiruvāimoli of Nammālvār. This idea of Rāmānuja must have originated from his intention to educate the leadership of the Vaiṣṇava community on the double tradition of Sanskritic and Tamil Vaiṣṇava theism - the Ubhaya Vedānta. Pillān is regarded by the northern school as Rāmānuja's first successor, the propagator of both Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures (Ubhaya Vedānta Pravartaka). It is said that Rāmānuja's work incorporates his oral commentary on Tiruvāimoli and at times it looks as if Pillān stays closer to the characteristic expression of Rāmānuja. With time, the concept of Ubhaya Vedānta developed and took shape and by the 13th century it evolved itself into a sound system.

The prolific literary period after Rāmānuja included Nañjīyār's commentary on Tiruvāimoli called the *nine thousand,* Periavaççanpillai, pupil of Naṁpillai, wrote the *twenty-four thousand*. Then Iḍu or the *thirty-six thousand* was prepared by Vaḍakkuttiruvītipillai. This whole line of teachers was interested in spreading the Tamil prabandham among people. Pillān was in charge of both the Vedāntas, in Sanskrit as well as Tamil sources. Actually, those were two lines of teachers starting with Nañjīyār and Pillān respectively. The school represented by the former attached more importance to the Prabandham and that of the latter gave equal importance to both. In the period not later than 1600 A.D., the former came to be called as the Tenkalai school and the latter as Vaḍakalai school. The name of the latter was chosen vaḍa northern to mean Sanskrit as against Tamil (Ten).

Rāmānuja instructed his disciples to study the Śrībhāṣya and propagate it. Those who were not equipped for it were asked to

27. P.N. Śrīnivasaçarya - ibid, p.431
28. Śrī Rāmānuja - Ubhayavedanta - K.K.A. Venkatacari in Studies in Rāmānuja

study the compositions of the Ālvārs and propagate them. The work in the temple such as sweeping, washing, preparation of festoons, bringing water for the worship of the deity was enjoined upon those who were not equipped for the study of the hymns of Ālvārs. Parāśarabhaṭṭa, through Nanjīyar, Naṁpillai and others down the line of descent were steeped in the study of Śrībhāṣya, but they felt that the majority of the people could understand only the Tamil compositions, when they are expounded in Tamil with an admixture of Sanskrit words (which came to be known as *Maṇipravāla*. Therefore, they chose to concentrate on propagation of the contents of the hymns of Ālvārs. In a way, this was helpful for the spread of Vaisnavite ideals among the masses as well. At the same time, the community following the principles of this school preferred the Ālvārs hymns to the study of the Śrībhāṣya. It is wrong to hold the view that the tenkalai scholars completely ignored the study of Śrībhāṣya. Even those who studied it felt that their duty was to propagate the purport of the four thousand hymns. The scholars of the other school were engrossed in the study of the Śrībhāṣya and the Ālvārs' hymns and in propagating both. As they were spending much of their time in the study and propagation of both the Vedāntas, they had less time to attend to the needs of the temple. On the other hand, those people who belonged to the line of Nañjīyār and Naṁpillai who did not have the equipment for the study of the hymns, opted for kaiṅkarya (service) in temples. The result became marked by a rift between the two lines and came to be known as Tenkalai and Vaḍakalai schools. This rift started about 1600 A.D.. Added to this, the Vadakalais chose to the recitation of the Vedas, while the Tenkalai school preferred to recite the hymns of Ālvārs. Both the recitations started at first in all temples without much distinction. Then arose infighting between the two - over the share of the food-offerings and emoluments in the temples. Gradually, the temples became markedly characterised by the names of the two schools in an exclusive way.

Rāmānuja created seventy four pontiffs (Simhasanādhipatīs) as Āçāryapurusas to carry on his work, but this degenerated gradually into a practice with some açāryapuruṣas holding exclusive rights in certain temples, though they were not fully qualified to deserve the post. The present condition of the temples of Viṣṇu in Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Karnataka is a matter of disgust and despair. Rāmānuja's cherished desires are completely

forgotten. One sect blames the other and treats it with utter contempt. Each sect claimed rightful inheritance from Rāmānuja, but never followed fully what the master taught. While Śrībhāṣya and the Bhagavadviṣaya traditions were holding position till about 1550 A.D., there sprung another course of learning called the rahasyasaṁpradaya. This is concerned with the esoteric maṅtras i.e. the mula maṅtra, dvya and the Çaramaslōka. Along with this the concept of Śaraṇāgati got included for treatment. This line of tradition has been carried in the Maṇipravāla.

There is another aspect of this rift, which could be traced to its sources. In general, the Vaisnavites, who are well equipped for learning Vedanta, study at the feet of their açāryas; Rāmānuja's Śrībhāṣya, the commentaries on the hymns of Ālvārs and the Rahasyagraṅthas. While all the three except the last have texts to follow, the last mentioned does not have a text of ancient origin. Whatever the ācāryas down from Nāthamuni taught to their pupils as the three Rahasyas, Mūlamaṅtra (Asṭākṣara), Dvaya and Çaramaślōka, had to pass at first through oral tradition. Each ācārya interpreted them in his own way, but fully conscious that he is doing so in strict adherence to the tradition handed down from his master. It is but natural that at one stage or the other, the interpretations, as the words reveal, perhaps went off at a tangent. This is not to suggest that such minute strayings were intentional. Otherwise, the explanation given for concepts by both the sects could not be at variance with each other. This is one aspect. Such strayings could have happened in the following way also. An incident recorded in the hymns or in the paurāṇic narrations of God's exploits could have been conceived in a particular angle and was invested with a trait possessed by it but emphasised at the expense of other traits. Perhaps, this must be the real reason for the doctrinal differences between the two sects. It is clear that this rift became wider at the time of Vedānta Deśika. To dispel any doubt about a strong basis for this, he writes in the Satsaṁpradāyapariśuddhi that in the line of Rāmānuja, there are passages which are acceptable to all parties. There are differences only in construing the words of those passages. This need not affect the saṁpradāya of Rāmānuja.

The items on which the two sects differ are enumerated in the following ślōka[29] :

Bhedāh svāmi kṛpāphalaṅgatiṣu śrīvyāptyōpayatvayo
tadvātsalyadayāniruktivāsam nyāsé ça tatkartari

29. P.N. Śrīnivasaçarya - ibid, p.536

dharmatyagabirodhayoh svāvihite nyāsānga hetutvayoh
prāyasçittavidhāni tadiyavhagana nuvyāptikaivalyoh

Eighteen topics are enumerated here. They are explained by Professor P.N. Śrīnivasacari in his Viśiṣṭādvaita (PP.535-537).

Most of the scholars who had claims to their study of the śāstras and therefore were well-equipped to study the Śrībhāṣya, devoted all their time studying and preaching the contributions of the Ālvārs.

As this sort of sectarianism based on the eighteen differences betwen the two schools developed from about 1200 A.D. and as a section of Vaiṣṇava scholars chose to prefer the prabandha to the Śrībhāṣya, they studied mostly in their houses or pāṭhaśālas till 1500 A.D. From about the middle of the 16th century, the temples became attractive to the people by virtue of the liberal donations granted by the ruling chieftains of principal localities. The scholars had therefore to choose the temple for their avenues for preaching. Of course, the temples were not left uncared for, in periods before this. They were not only centres of religious learning but also the places where the scholars imparted instructions to their disciples.

By the middle of the 16th century, those who rendered services in temples were awarded emoluments in kind and cash. This made the scholars move to the temples not merely to spread Vaiṣṇava religious concepts but also to render service by reciting the Vedas and compositions of the Ālvārs. Spreading of the knowledge gained from the study of Śrībhāṣya and Prabandha was gradually and totally forgotten as far as temple services were concerned. Added to this, there came into being the practice of honouring some sections of scholars as ācārya puruṣas of the temple. This practice continues even to this day. Again, to recite the Veda, knowledge of the śāstras and Śrībhāṣya was not required hence the scholars who did not study the Vedas were left in the background. Even so, sound knowledge of the Prabandha was not required. Those who could recite the compositions of the Ālvārs by rote were preferred for rendering service to recite the Prabandhams, the knowledge of which was not considered essential. Both kind of services earned emoluments.

Curiously enough, it was probably about 1500 A.D. that Vedānta Deśika came to be considered as most representative of the Śrībhāṣya school and also of Vedapārāyana. Respect was

shown to Rāmānuja by reciting the sloka *"Rāmānujadayōpātram jnānavairāṣyabhūṣaṇam śrīmadveṇkaṭanātharāyām vande Vedāntadeśikam* and singing *valitirunāmam* in his honour whenever Prabandhams were recited by this section of the community. The other school was represented by Maṇavālamāmuni whose praise is sung as *"Śrīśaileśa Dayāpātram Dibhaktyādigunarnavam Yatīndrapravaṇam vande Ramyājāmātarammunim"* followed by *"Valittirunāmam"*. It was the payment in kind and rarely cash too that attracted the followers of the two traditions in temple service. During the time of Maṇavālamāmuni, Kāñcī became a centre for Sanskrit scholarship and Śrīrangam for Ālvār's hymns. The interpretation of the Śrīrangam school had a superior aim - that of disseminating the spritual knowledge to the masses. The Kāñcī school stood by Vedic authority.

To look at this difference, we must get back to the two temples of Kāñcī and Śrīrangam during the 12th and the 13th centuries. During this period, the Śrīrangam temple was being controlled by a powerful non-brāhmin clientele of land holders The entry of the Śūdra community in the liturgical routine of the temple obviously had the sanction of Yamuna. It is true that the first incorporation of Prabandham with daily worship had occurred. These discourses by Yāmuna and Rāmānuja have been attended by mammoth audience. Their discourses were full of everyday analogies. While the sanskrit tradition in Kāñcī goes back to Rāmānuja's time for incorporation in the temple of Varada. But the Kāñcī ācāryas' debates were to defend their doctrines, with logic and with the aid of the pramāṇas.

Initially these two schools were complimentary to each other. After some years, the gap between them became wider and began to manifest in sectarian doctrinal differences. The period from Rāmānuja to Vedānta Deśika roughly covered by two centuries (1150-1350) was a critical one for Śrīvaiṣṇavism, when the seeds of discord were sown resulting in a clear split in the 15th and the 16th centuries. There is no epigraphical evidence, except for the two sets of guruparaṁparās. So far as the administration was concerned Uḍayavar tittam continued.

This period seems to be more of party spirit than of split.[30] Rāmānuja followed both methods in his expositions, but the latter split into two schools gave birth to two guruparamparās. Naṁpillai was instrumental in making the Prabandhic school

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30. Hari Rao - The History of the Śrīrangam Temple, p.113.

popular. Pinpalagiya Perumal Jīyā wrote the guruparamparā from where we find the sanctity and veneration for Naṁpillai's potentials in upholding a creed.

Again, it was in this period that the southern school which had Maṇavālamāmuni as the chief āçārya came to be known as Tenkalai and that which owed allegiance to Vedāntadeśika as Vaḍakalai–kalai or kala meaning love or subject of study. *Ten* is taken in the sense of south and vaḍa in the sense of north. These names, Tenkalai and Vaḍakalai, are meaningless, but attempts have been made with some success to connect Tenkalai with the learning of Tamil sources and Vaḍakalai with Sanskrit sources. This identification is also incorrect as those who are now known as Tenkalais have not abandoned the study of Sanskrit. Some took to śāstras and made a thorough study of the Śrībhāṣya but they had preferred to recite the Prabandhams, though well learned in the Vedas. So, the preferential attitude is to be noted. This preference is not borne out of hatred or prejudice for the sanskrit sources or Vedas similarly, the vaḍakalai group studies both the Vedas and Prabandhas. Some who are not competent to study the Śrībhāṣya take to the study of the Prabhandam.

But all cannot recite the Vedas. Thus, majority of people in both kalas are capable of reciting only the Prabandham and while reciting the Prabandham, the tenkalais sing in favour of Maṇavaḷamāmuni and the vāḍakalai, do so in favour of vedāntadeśika. While this singing of their āçārya is really laudable, both the sects are on war path as it were, dissuading the other sect and claim their right to the utter exclusion of the other sect. This rift has become so widened that in some temples, only one reigns supreme enjoying all the glory and rewards disallowing the members of the other sect in participating in doing their service or rather compelling those members to remain silent all the while. Here scholarship in the Śrībhāṣya or Prabandham is of no account. Merely belonging to a particular sect would be enough to show off that they alone are the illustrious torch-bearers of Rāmānuja's ideals.

Now, the eighteen points of difference are forgotten. What remains to divide one sect from the other is (i) to put the ūrdhvapuṇḍra according to one's tradition. This shall adorn one's forehead and also the vehicles, pavilions, utensils and others. (2) tenkalais prostrate once before God, while the vaḍakalais do it twice or four times. Other differences are of minor nature.

Regarding the commandments of Rāmānuja, the leaders of both the sects should ponder over whether they are being followed truly in letter and spirit.

How does the rift between the tenkalai and vadakalai sects affect the temple affairs ? The doctrinal differences numbering eighteen have nothing to do with temple administration or rituals or worship. It is the ūrdhvapuṇḍra and the claim of a sect to sing the hymns of the Ālvārs to the total exclusion of the other that has produced an adverse effect on the Vaiṣṇava community. Honouring Maṇavālamāmuni or Vedāntadeśika should not have become the monopoly of the sect concerned. Both could be honoured. Singing the praise of one of these āçāryas to the exclusion of the other is a minor affair. Both the sects could sing their hymns in praise of their āçārya. The entire four thousand of Ālvārs could not be the possession of only one sect.

The āçāryas of yore had emphatically stated that a Vaiṣṇava shall not insult another. This does not exclude the question of a member of one sect insulting the member of the other sect. But, the temples everywhere in Tamil Nadu have become battle grounds. Some of the scholars of the present day wish for a perpetual rift so that one sect can throw mud at another and hold it's head high of having done yeoman service to Bhāgavatas. Incorrigibility of the sectarian stubbornness cannot be overcome with the members of the sects holding sway over the temple affairs.

It is to determine whether bhakti and prapatti were clearly distinguished as two separate paths to mōkṣa at the time of Rāmānuja. But by the time of Naṭātūr Ammāl, and the early Śrīrangam āçāryas, the destination between these two upayas had been accepted by the Śrīvaiṣṇava community. Prapatti, a simple surrender as upaya for mōkṣa is documented in Ālvārs' hymns, the epics and the Puranas and in Pāñcarātra. It is one view that prapatti is one upaya which the earlier āçāryas like Yāmuna and Rāmānuja practised themselves and taught privately to their disciples. There arose some points of dispute among the northern and southern sects, tenkalai and vaḍakalai, which concern the Bhaktiyoga as an upāya and condition under which it should be given up in favour of prapatti.

This difference is brought out on the interpretations given for the dictum *sarva dharman parityajya māmékam Çaraṇam vraja*. This expression, though it pre-supposes redemption as the

expression of grace, (Nirhétuka Kṛpa) at the same time reiterates the fact that grace needs a vyāja. Grace cannot take birth in a soil of hostility.

Rāmāṇyaṇa is taken as a text book of practical religion and is known in Vaiṣṇava parlance as Abhayapradānasāra. Here, Brahman incarnated into this world as the saviour. Śaranāgati is universal salvation. The end - puruṣārtha is kaiṅkarya or service to Him. The whole Rāmāyaṇa, spreads the theme of forgiveness for all who seek refuge at the Lord's feet. The instances of Ahalya, Kākāsura, Vibhīṣaṇa are proof of this. The secret doctrines called the rahasyas (of the mūla maṅtra, the dvaya and Çaramaślōka contain the essence of prapatti), which is to say that the saviour is the means, and his grace is not conditioned by the law of karma. The devotee is the Bhāgavata, whose worth is not governed by his social status. This is the tengalai view. But the northern School's view is different, i.e., the Brahman is self realised and is the siddhōpāya. (1) But the devotee or mumukṣu seeks the grace of God by bhakti and prapatti. Prapatti can be undertaken by: (1) those who have only a general knowledge of this means. (2) those who do not have the ability to perform other upāyas, Bhaktiyoga is unsuitable (1) for those not in the upper three varṇas. (2) for those who lack knowledge or ability, (3) those who have strong anguish that they cannot bear the delay.

For Vedānta Deśika, Bhaktiyoga is not a valid upāya but only a provisional means for mōksā[31]. In the context of the Gītā, he interprets the Çaramaślōka as a reference to Arjuna's helplessness and when Kṛṣṇa recognised Arjuna's eagerness for the goal Kṛṣṇa immediately teaches prapatti, dispels Arjuna's fear by proclaiming the Çaramaśloka (Śaraṇāgati) as the easy and the fast way to the attainment of the Lord[32]. In toto, Deśika defends prapatti as Saṅgamasthāna enjoined in the śastras as necessary to propitiate the Lord, who immediately grants salvation.

On points of dispute we find that the tengalais appeal to examples from popular literature and Ālvār's hymns, while Deśika involves specific instances from Dharmaśāstras, as the highest authority[33]. The former's model for Prapatti is the spontaneous devotion by the Ālvārs. For Deśika, Ālvārs devotion

31. P.N. Śrīnivasaçarya - op. cit., p.404
32. Rahasyatrayasāram - 29, p.1150-51
33. Patricia Mumme - The Śrīvaiṣṇava Theology - Disputes, p.262

is not to be taken as normative when they are directly in conflict with śāstraic injunction of the Varṇāṣrama dharma.

In Āçārya Hṛdaya of Alagiya Maṇavāta Perumāl Nāyanār, the śāstra followers are compared to those who cross the river by swimming and holding on to the raft, while followers of tirumantra are said to cross over by sitting effortlessly. The tenkalai school, made use of the popular legends and analogies to illustrate their theme, with a wide range of doctrinal interpretation to get the message across. Despite the articulated Śrī Vaiṣṇava doctrine, by authority from Sanskrit texts and logical thinking in a move to correct the inconsistencies he strengthened the course of the Rāmānuja sampradaya with a difference.

Evolution/development of prapatti cult after Rāmānuja: All the doctrinal differences between the two schools relate to the cult of prapatti. Though Rāmānuja has made stray reference to prapatti as a means of bhakti, in the Śaraṇāgati Gadya[34]. Prapatti must have developed after Rāmānuja under the authority of many āçāryas. It is one view that the post Rāmānuja prapatti cult[35] is almost an exclusive creation of the tenkalais. All their writings indicate that it was an original construction and not a mere corollary to the vaṭakalai work. On the other hand, the vatakalai works on Prapatti indicate a dissent from the tenkalai view on the ground of reversion of the smārta view and so on. It can be concluded by saying human love is also an expression of the mercy of the Lord and the religion of prapatti is the gospel of universal forgiveness, which the leaders gave to the unity and harmony of the Vaiṣṇava community. The rift of the 18th century must have dismayed both of them in whose name it was carried out.

Maṇavāla Māmuni was born in 1370. After his marriage he migrated to Śrīrangam. He had a remarkable mastery over the Divyaprabandham. In 1425, he established himself in Śrīrangam as Periya Jīyar Uttamanaṁbi. Whosoever erred in his administrative duties was corrected by him and became his disciple. Māmuni took lessons of Śrībhāṣya from Kiḍāmbi Nāyanār on the Kaveri, discoursed on the Prabandha and wrote commentaries on works of Pillai Locaçārya.

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34. Dr. V. Varadacarya - The two great Acāryas, Vedānta Desika and Maṇavāla Māmuni, p.IV,ii
35. ibid, p.ix,11

Under his supervision the Īḍu was edited and published nd also a gloss was added by him by name Pramāṇatirattu. His hief work is on the teachings of the āçāryas called Upadéśa latnamalai. He had eight disciples to his credit, known as the ṣṭadiggajas. On the vaḍakalai side, the main important uccessor of Vedānta Deśika was his own son, Varadāçārya alias Jainaçārya and Brahma Tantra Svatantra Jīyar. With these people, he guruparmparā almost comes to a close. From now on, the naṭhas of the rival schools developed the sectarianism intensely.

A close study of the works of Maṇavāla Māmuni would eveal his erudition. He had demonstrated that most abstruse roblems of Sanskrit writers could be discussed both in Sanskrit nd Tamil. The āçāryas down from Māmuni were quite able and listinguished to give guidance to their pupils. If some āçāryas vrote and some did not write, it is because they did not feel it ecessary to write. In toto, all of them were qualified for both iterary as well as administrative worthiness. When the idol of Ranganatha was carried by Pillai Lokāçārya and the manuscripts of the Śrutaprakāṣika by Deśika, Śrī Ranganatha was restored to Śrīrangam only forty years later. From 1327 to 1371, Śrīrangam under Muslim rule had ceased to be the religious capital of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. The temple remained desolate. The inner shrines were all in ruins.

During these days, the elaborate Uḍayavar Tittam suffered badly. The worship was almost clandestine. The seventy-four seats had ceased to function. But the sacred texts were safeguarded. Even then, many valuable works were lost. For the exposition of Tiruvaimoli, Maṇavāla Māmuni made his headquarters at Śrīrangam. In fact he presided over the tremendous work of reconstruction of the temple.

Once again Śrīrangam became the spiritual capital of Śrīvaiṣṇavas. The Upadéśaratnamāla provides a calendar of saints and teachers evidently for observance at temples and homes, and also a manual of domestic writings to make up for the rift in tradition - *May the divine commandment of Rāmānuja flourish more and more.* In its victorious course, at all times and places, is a well known stanza with which the prayers at the close of the daily services in home and temple begins.

The economic, social, political and cultural importance of temples have been noted definitely not with a historical

perspective. Though there is enough information about these. They are not arranged properly.

The temple fulfils three requirements (1) as an abode of God (2) it plays the role of transaction between worshippers and deity (3) it serves to define certain authority, between worship and social relations.

To the present day, the temple has suffered no cultural change but then there has been a social change for the better. Though rigid norms govern the functions, there arose certain conflicts of honour from time to time. The Vijayangara kings have had a major share in protecting the rights of the temples. the relationship of the kings with the deity resulted in the fact that the sovereign deity is the paradigm of royal authority. The duties of the king spread over from maintenance of peace and order in his kingdom to arbitration in temple disputes. From the inscriptions we come to know that these royal protections were entrusted to local sectarian groups known as 'Vaiṣṇava Rakṣai'.

Besides the lavish kingly endowments, there flowed in from a wide cross section of society, many benefactions. In the middle of the 14th century, with the scholastic disputes in the Śrīvaiṣṇava community the sectarian leaders must have permitted the Telugu warriors to exercise their military expansion by gifting the temple honour. The cycle must have worked as follows:

The warrior kings distributed their agrarian resources, for the running of the temples and to the successful administration by the sectarian leaders.

With Uḍayavar Tiṭṭam followed in Śrīrangam, on a sound basis, Rāmānuja involved teaching as well as organisational activity all over South India through the āçāryapuruṣas, who formed the skeletal structure of leadership of the Śrīvaiṣṇava community in later period which went on till the Muslim invasion. The existing Uḍayavar Tiṭṭam established a link between recruitment to the sect and rewards for new recruits by way of a share in the service as well as temple honours. By the middle of 12th century Śrī Vaiṣṇavism had made a firm start in south India and doctrinal differences arose between the two communities. By the first half of the 14th century, the intellectual division created two lines of succession in sect leadership. Conflict was only on doctrines and had spread over temple control and Rāmānuja's Tiṭṭam still remained stable. Only in the second

half of the 14th century these tensions exploded as explained before.

During this time the Telugu nāiks of the Vijayanagara empire consolidated their control over south India. Muslim invaders were defeated by the Telugu warriors and temple worship was restored and a new political order was established.

Even the Tirupati temple evolved during the Vijayanagara period in the following ways : (1) the improvement of the ritual calendar (2) a shift in the nature of endowments from lamps to food offerings (3) the recitals of the Vedas and Prabandham by Brahmin and non-Brahmin devotees.

With the establishment of the Prabandhic school in an organised basis by Maṇavāla Māmuni and his disciples, sectarian leaders of the sanskrit school institutionalised their work by linking themselves to the Vijayanagara kings. they set up bases in Kannada and Telugu areas and in some temples in the northern territories of south India. Three sets of those were as follows : (1) The jīyars of Ahōbila Maṭha (2) Āçārya puruṣas spread in the Telugu districts (3) The monastic heads of Brahma Taṅtra Parakāla Maṭha in Mysore.

During this time, the heads of the Ahōbila Maṭha evolved in Kurnool a temple related protocol with the Vijayanagara chiefs. By 1578, it appears they had invited Vijayanagara rulers and aided in ousting the Muslim invaders from the locality. By about the end of the 16th century, the Ahōbila Maṭha had become a major base for the sectarian activities of the Sanskrit school in the Telugu country.

The second set of leaders were the Tātāçāryas who had settled in the Krishna district. they became Rajagurus, royal preceptors to the Vijayanagara kings. This relation reached its zenith during the days of the Aravitu dynasty of the Vijayanagara empire. They wielded great power over land, rituals and functionaries in the temples. The extended their sway even over temples in the Chengleput districts of Tamil Nadu. With the decline of the Vijayanagara empire, their descendants migrated to Mysore, and won the kindliness of the kings of Mysore.

It is approximately at this time that the foundations of Brahmataṅtra Parakāla Maṭha must have been laid. the founder of this maṭha was the disciple of Vedānta Deśika the revered figure of the northern tradition. Subsequent to this another maṭha was also started by the name - Munitraya Maṭha. Rāmānuja was

the originator of Viśiṣṭādvaita - a monism with one central principle. It is not simple (Nirguna) or exclusive, but is all inclusive, (Viśiṣṭam). This is well brought out in the Srutaprakāṣika.

As mentioned earlier soon after the establishment of the Ahōbila and Brahmatantra maṭhas, emerged a very austere maṭha in the name of the Munitraya - in memory of the three munis. This school exclusively follows the style of Vedānta Desika. The close alliance of Deśika and Akṣōbhya a follower of Madhva against Vidyāraṇya must have influenced Vedānta Deśika to chalk out a fresh path to denounce the doctrine of identity sponsored by Śaṅkara. The exclusive claim to this saṁpradaya by a section of the followers of Rāmānuja is considered by the other school as partial and untenable. This claim is based on the sole belief that the medium employed to explain the philosophy was Sanskrit, a medium perfectly suited to project the thought.

Munitrayam addresses the conflict of the importance of the vehicle of conveyance of thought with that of thought itself. Between word and thought, the latter is more important and the former is recognised as an instrument of revelation without any omission. The three munis or the three experts in the system of Viśiṣṭādvaita - Nāthamuni - a non ascetic, still 'dubbed' a muni, for his close contact with the fundamental principle of life, whose precious work could not reach scholars of the post Rāmānuja period; Yāmuna Muni, the grandson of Nāthamuni, and the third muni, Rāmānuja who followed the course started by Nāthamuni and Yāmuna. This is Munitraya, both the early preceptors encouraged the Drāviḍaveda as well, so it may be summed up as short sightedness to believe that Munitraya is the exclusive monopoly of a few who regard only Sanskrit as the medium of the Vedic content.

Coming back to the renowned Parakālamaṭham, since the rulers of Mysore showed great commitment to Vaiṣṇavism, they got the rites of initiation from the svāmīs of this matham by using the varāha seals on their documents[36]. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries attempts were made by the Sanskrit school to penetrate temples controlled by the Tamil school and fight for their shared control.

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36. N. Desikacarya - Origin and Growth of Śrī Brahmatantra Parakalamatham

In due course of time, temple honours received greater significance since those who had access to it gained the benefits of temple resources. In the course of British rule both the village and urban elite participated in temple worship. The British administrative system tried its best to manage the conflict in the temple by agreeing to act in accordance with the structural needs of the temple community, also to provide a set of rules for the organisation (process) of the temple.

As protectors of the temple, they gave up their former role and shifted the matter to the judiciary for the resolution of the conflict. the legal drama according to Appadorai is very interesting since the Anglo - Indian judges and the native litigants provided ample fun with their respective terminologies. The judges viewed the temple as a charitable trust. Their focus of cure was on symptom and not on the cause. As we have seen before, the law courts helped the temple for a social change, in equilibrium, through the concrete ambitions of a host of individuals. The British rule and the Independent Government has atleast allowed the temple to maintain the idea of the deity as an authoritative figure but the rules and actions that determine the management and control have undergone a change for the better.

SECTARIAN DISPUTE IN TEMPLE WORSHIP

Although Śrī Rāmānuja seemed to have laid the foundation for a synthesis - between Sanskrit and Tamil, between ritualistic Vedic tradition and idol-centred rituals of the āgama tradition, between impersonal advaita and personal devotionalism (bhakti), the difference of opinion between the followers of Vedānta Deśika and of Pillai Lokāçārya eventually led to the establishment of the vaḍagalai school (Kāñçīpuram) and the tenkalai school (Śrīrangam) as said before.

The two views, markaṭa and mārjāra, interpreted the idea of prapatti differently; the latter resulted in placing the āçārya in a position of power and authority. By the first half of the 14th century A.D., south Indian Śrīvaiṣṇavism was a divided community. With the political influence of the Telugu warriors over the Tamil region in the next two centuries, and the formation of the Śrīranganārāyaṇa Jīyar Ādhīnam at Śrīangam, the tenkalai school began to be institutionalised. Honours for the head included first place in prasādam, tīrtham, parivaṭṭam etc..

According to Kōil Olugu, Periya Kṛṣṇarāya Uttamanambi of Śrīrangam (claiming to be a descendant of Periaālvār) made several visits to Vijayanagara and obtained grants from a number of donors. Under Maṇavāla Māmuni (1370-1445) Prabandhic Vaiṣṇavism became the dominant sect in the South. He set up his eight disciples (aṣṭa diggajas) to popularise the creed. These eight provided the institutional basis for tenkalai Vaiṣṇavism.

After about 1500 A.D., the Sanskrit School began to consolidate itself along similar lines, as exemplified in Tirupati. With the increased importance of the recitation of Vedas and Prabandhams by brāhmins and non-brāhmins and other measures, the temple began to be a 'vast socio-religious centre'. Lavish endowments and the power of Śrī Vaiṣṇava leaders in fruitful mediation for royal endowments were noticeable.

Disputes began as power increased. As early as 1709, in the reign of Narasimharāja Wodeyar of Mysore, the temple at Melkote is known to have sought royal interference to settle sectarian disputes. Thus, the invocation, "*Rāmānuja dayāpātram*" was enforced in that temple. When the East India Company established itself for trading purposes, sectarian leaders began to refer disputes to the Company officials; some of the results of this were amusing, thanks to the gross ignorance of the arbitrators in matters strictly related to sects of a religion they did not understand. As Appadorai observes - "*The court's efforts to classify, define, and demarcate the concrete meaning of the concept of the tenkalai community of Triplicane generated more tension than it resolved*".

The court proceedings which started as a social drama later became a legal battle. The affairs of the temple became very violent. It was a battle between trustees, priests, adhyakapas, non-brāhmin worshippers and the schools of the north and south recension. These disputes continued in many forms until 1951 when the Madras Government passed the Hindu Religious Endowment Act which went to protect the funds of the institutions. The temple, a valuable link between man and god, society and religion and which was a positive force for the well being of mankind, began to sway in the hands of a fanatic crowd given to jealousy and violence.

In summing up, we find that the śrīrangam āçāryas sought to defend the soul's surrender to the Lord, in which case the Vedāntic principles were sacrifices. But Deśsika on the other hand emphasised to defend the Vedantic doctrines and śāstras and

thereafter devotion is interpreted with the limits of the above. Thus the expounders of the Viśiṣṭādvaita vedānta established the truth of the synthetic philosophy of Rāmānuja saying that the objective of Śrībhāṣya and Trivāimoli is identical. In fact, they sought to promote the faith in ample measure. But the extreme loyalty of the following generations resulted to work against this objective. Thus started the bitter struggle in the 18th century.

THE AFFAIRS OF THE TEMPLE AFTER RĀMĀNUJA

ŚRĪRANGAM TEMPLE

During and immediately after *Rāmānuja's* time, scholars like Garuḍavāhana Paṇḍita, Perianambi, Kurattālvān Amudanar, and Āççān Pillai were honoured. Some of their writings were Śrīranga Mahatmyam, Āśvalayaṇa Sūtra, Bōdhāyana Mimāṁsā, Vedānta Sūtra and Vyākaraṇa. The changes Rāmānuja made were continued for 200 years and many of them exist even today. Bhattar and Nañjīyār took over the affairs. In 1327, the temple suffered an invasion by Malik Kafur, and Lokāçārya took the utsavabera via Tirumālируncholai and Kōzhikkod to Tirumalai, and the temple was closed by walls built around. The rule of the Saṅgama dynasty 1350-1490 saw the restoration of the temple from Muslim occupation. In 1371, Kaṁpaṇan defeated the sultanate and restored the respective deities in the temple. The reorganisation process was beginning to be managed by Uttamanambis. Slowly, the kings refrained from ruling over lands that had been granted to temples and the Rājās gave back the lands to the temple and appointed their own men as accountants and superintendent. Therefore, the code of Uḍayavar began to collapse though slowly. When Kandāḍai Rāmānuja, a Senāpati Duraṅtara became powerful[1], the position of the Uttamanaṁbis were lowered. Kṛṣṇadevarāya visited Śrīrangam and made gifts of villages. After his death Aççutarāya visited Śrīrangam and showered it with rich donations. The temple inscription of this period show that the administration had settled down, and there was no official interference from the royal rulers. Then came the Nāyaks of Madura and Tanjore who continued with their patronage and poured benefactions. Noted among them is Vijayaranga Çokkonātha, a scholar king. In 1650 Chanda Sahib tried to attack Śrīrangam and a ransom was paid to save the temple. During the Carnatic wars 1743-63 the temple services

1. V.N.Hari Rao-The History of Śrīrangam Temple

were frittered away with the siege of Tiruchirappalli, and the temple was occupied by the British and the French, but was saved by giving the invader a payment. The Kōil Olugu refers to the occupation by the Unal (Yavana) of Puduççeri, (the French enclave). It also says that after 1790 A.D. Tipu invaded the Carnatic and stationed himself for 6 days. He abandoned the siege when he was pacified by a laudatory verse sung by one Vādula Deśika. After this, in 1801 when the English got the Carnatic from the muslim rulers, even the temple came under the British control, i.e. the East India Company. John Wallace, the collector made investigation in the income and expenditure and laid down a tittam according to which Rs.31000 as revenue and seven thousand from pilgrims' offerings was to be given to the temple from the treasury, which even covered the repairs of the temple. By this time the rift between the two Vaiṣṇava schools started with sectarian disputes. Wallace[2] summoned both the sections and declared that when the temple was manned by the tenkalais, the vaḍakalais could not claim any connection with it. He ordered that the tankalai priests should perform the rituals in the houses of vaḍakalais as usual and receive their customary dues in accordance with the mamul custom. In spite of all this the disputes did not end at all but went to the law courts which upheld the tenkalai sect. At this time, the British Government's direct control was withdrawn and was vested in those who were qualified to conduct the administration with fidelity. The Sthalattārs constituted a body of their own to run the administration. The revenue officers were to manage the lands of the temple by having contracts with the agriculturists. Thus the Sthanattārs were constituted in 1801[3]. During this time, some philanthropists donated money for English education besides the Vedic education. In due course of time, as all other temples, the Hindu Religious Endowment Board took over the administration and is running it efficiently. The temple has slowly gained back its original splendour and grandeur of the days of Śrī Rāmānuja.

The great temple of Lord Ranga known in Vaiṣṇava parlance as Peria Kōil still remains an awe to the crowds who call him as *My Ranga*. The Lord is a member of every family of Śrīrangam and the life of every individual centres around the great Kastūri Ranga.

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2. ibid.
3. ibid.

TIRUPATI TEMPLE

After the fall of the Çōlas, the empire disintegrated. The last king being Kulōttunga-III Maravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya invaded the Çōla empire in the 13th century, many local chieftains declared their independence. The Tirupati temple received endowments from Jāta Varma Sundara Pāṇḍya. Minor chieftains like Kaḍava and Yādava Rāya gave benefactions to the temple by way of the tulārōhaṇa ceremony.

Among the Telugu Pallavas, the names of Vijaya Ganḍagōpala and his queen who had made gifts to the temple stand out. Though there were some land donations the gifts were mainly for lamp lighting.

During this time, the[4] Sthānattār or the temple committee was charged with the duty of running the temple efficiently. Their duties comprised of receiving endowments and investing them properly, and the functions of the endowments duly carried out. The Committee was known by the name "Mādapatyamseyvār". Though these were held in high respect, they were still not the trustees of the temple. The institution of temple accountants is confirmed in the śaka 1301, by way of epigraphical records. Later on, the Sthānattārs transformed themselves from temple executives to temple trustees.

From the Pallava days to the Vijayanagara days, besides food offerings and flower decorations of the deity, celebrations of different festivals were conducted. The Sthānattārs were requested to arrange for feeding the Vaiṣṇavas in certain maṭhas. The jīyars of the maṭhas rendered ample service to the temple. This probably is the origin of the present day jīyar or jiyaṅgār with his service in the temples of *Venkatésvara* and Śrī Gōvindarāja.

The temple achieved its full glory during the Vijayanagar period. Among the names of royal personages, Kumāra Kaṁpana and Bukka Rāya, stand out. Provision was made for Vedapārāyaṇam, by prominent Vaiṣṇavas. Then came the period of saluvas and tuluvas, during whose rule several festivals came to be resuscitated in the temple like the Koḍai Tirunāl, Pavitrōtsavam and Adhyayanotsavam.

4. Dr. N.Ramesan-The Tirumala Temple ,p.334

During the reign of Kṛṣṇadevaraya many gifts were made)ersonally by him and his queens. He had strong Vaiṣṇava eanings and took to his gurus Vyāsatiśrtha Śrīpada Uḍayar and ılso an elder contemporary by name Śrīmannārāyaṇa Jīyar of the \hōbila maṭha. Inspired by these gurus Kṛṣṇadevarāya composed ıis Telugu kāvya, Amuktamālyada. Some religious men and poets ıave also added their mite to the charm of the temple during his period.

Then came the Aravīḍu kings by which time, Telugu had :ome to stay as the local language of administration. Then came he political struggle for the supremacy of the Muslim kings; the 'ortunes of the temple underwent a change. [5]Since the agrarian ›conomy was solely agricultural, the temple always had a place n the monetary system of society. The Tirumala inscriptions hrow enough light on the socio-economic systems that prevailed hen. Through these inscriptions we come to know much of the ›ocio economic study.

Slowly, by about the 15th century and thereafter there was ı great increase in endowments of land and money.[6] The ›thānattārs consisted of some laymen from Tirumala and some 'unctionaries of the temple which expanded rapidly. A number)f minor temples were established along with feeding and rest ıouses. In due course of time, a sort of a decentralisation was ›ffected which left the temple managers with freedom to invest he endowments, to build tanks and irrigation channels, and to listribute donor's share of the consecrated food etc.. Since the 'esponsibilities were met successfully, the endowments also ncreased, which is a tribute to the secular management of the emple.

After the fall of the Vijayanagar empire it became difficult o realise income from the lands due to the disturbed political :onditions. Though this was a passing phase, Śivāji had by this ime established his Maratha supremacy in the Carnatic and in .740, Ragōji Bhoṅslé visited the great shrine and offered jewels.

Later the Nawab of Arcot assigned the Temple revenues to he East India Company. The military skirmishes during the :arnatic wars had greatly affected the temple and its revenue.

No. 293 - T.T.- Courtesy Dr. N. Ramesan
No. 111 - G.T

In 1782 Hyder took the Çandragiri Fort but did not interfere with the temple and its affairs and revenue. In due course of time the East India Company became the owner of the temple. But it must be noted that the company officials treated the temple and the Lord with great respect and instituted several charities themselves. Immediately after peace was restored the company investigated all matters relating to the temple such as management, income, worship, the staff heredity etc. and got made records the details which are given below[7] -

1) The Diṭṭam, rations for food offerings
2) Kaiṅkarya paṭṭi - laying down duties of functionaries
3) Bruces's code for efficient administration of the temple.
4) The Sawal Jawab paṭṭi - a list of questions and answers relating to the duties of functionaries
5) The Paimāyiṣi account containing the measurement of temples and other buildings and an account of the deities and images, enshrined. The district collector working under the board of revenue became the ex-officio agent of the State Government.

Though much valuable work was done by the British civilian officers, the company's authority was ordered to be relinquished by Queen Victoria. The management was transferred in 1843 to Séva Dāss the head of the Hāthiramji maṭha which in due course of time turned out to be a record of waste and embezzlement. As a result of this the district court settled a scheme by which the mahant was duly constituted as the manager of the institution. Six generations of mahants from this date exercised authority over the Devasthānam.

In 1932, the T.T.D Act was passed to improve the administration and a commissioner was appointed. Under this act the whole management was left to a committee of seven members and a paid commissioner. The Act of 1966 placed the Tirumala temple at par with other religious institutions. It provided for a financial adviser, and a chief accounts officer. It defines the purposes for which the temple funds for learning and propagation of Hindu religion and culture where instituted. The T.T. Devasthanam has been successful in establishing the following things.

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7. Dr. N. Ramesan - The Tirumala Temple,p.486

1) Information centre (2) Accomodation for pilgrims, as well s sanitation, and by establishing Vedapāṭaśāla, colleges and high chool and the Śrī Venkaṭéśvara Univesity, a printing press,)riental institute, hospitals etc.. ghat roads to the temple, were aid Free darshan, bus service, construction of kalyāṇa manṭapas nd donation of vigrahas and articles required for new temples n a no profit basis are undertaken.

In short, the present day Tirupati Tirumala temple is a oveted pilgrim centre, the Lord draws the bhaktas from all over he world and He is a living testimony to a living God. If we urrender our hearts, in return, he pours his abundant grace and taste of the Divine, which is both measureless and invaluable.

MELKOṬE TEMPLE

We have already dealt with the organising skill of Rāmānuja n the establishment of the Śrīrangam temple and Tirumalai 'irupati temples as well.

Some of the donors to these temples also hailed from Tamil Jadu and they were mostly Śrīvaiṣṇavas. Uttamanaṁbi figures s one of the chief persons like the mahajanas looking after the nanagement of the temple. There were many benefactions anging from perpetual lamps to even betel leaves. In the temple itual there was a tremendous impact of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Even the rabandhas were chanted. Lands were granted for these chanters s well as for food offerings.

When Rāmānuja came to this territory he made Toṇṇūr his eadquarters for his activities. From here Rāmānuja moved on o Melkōṭe. This temple is a complex monument. Its components nust have been built over many years, that is to say even upto he 18th to 19th centuries when the Wodeyars were ruling the Aysore State. The legendary reason for Rāmānuja to move to his place is the abundance of the white mud. Immediately ahuttaraya made over this part of land to God Tirumanna 'erumal. In 1256 A.D. a shrine for Rāmānuja was built as well s a Rāmānuja kūṭam were built.

After Rāmānuja from the 14th century Melkōṭe assumed reater prominence. The Vijayanagara rulers, patronised this emple as well. By then it was recognised as Vaikuṇṭha on earth r a pavilion of knowledge (Jnānamanṭapa) - or even southern adari-kāsrama. Rāmānuja was hailed as Māyāvādi[8] Kōlāhala (a

B.R. Gopal-Śrī Rāmānuja in Karnataka,p. 27

terror to conjurers and Vedamārgapratiṣṭpanāçārya). There were even grants of offerings to the image of the Āçārya at Śrīperuṁpudūr. In 1369, there is a gift of land for worship and Adhyayanāutsavam. A Nammālvār shrine was also erected.

Subsequently, there must have been renovations and additions of the temple. The little income from the land was not enough for maintaining the Rāmānuja kūṭam so some more lands were purchased and were made over to Rāmānuja Jīyar who was to instruct all types of services and stayed in the matham and managed the affairs of repairs cleaning and white washing etc.

The Aravīdu dynasty boasts of donations for recital of Yatirāja Saptadi and Divyaprabandha. Besides these, flower gardens, Rāmānuja kūṭam and also the other maṭhas whose pontiffs by their scholarship and devotion attracted people and even received royal patronage emerged. Installation of Ālvārs' shrines and conducting festivals became popular in the 14th to the 16th centuries. A shrine was built for Vedānta Deśika at a later date.

The impact of Tamil language was conspicuous, for we find the Vijayanagara records have Tamil terms infiltrated in them.[9] The Melkōṭe temple by now had been under the administrative control of fifty two Vaiṣṇavas. This body is referred as mahājanas. They were the custodians of the temple property, worship and maintenance of temple servants. A secretary figures as a signatory. He is termed as senābōva Rāmānuja, an honorific name perhaps (an official agent of Rāmānuja). Many benefactions have come from the ruling Wodeyars. Some of them were followers of the Śrīvaiṣṇava doctrine, and held the Lord in great reverence. The recipients of lands were very learned scholars in philosophy, astrology, grammar and Krama in Veda. They were invited to settle down here and their houses were filled with yearly provisions. When the Vijayanagara empire declined there must have been a great confusion.

Even Tipu Sultan had donated elephants. A Muslim and a Hindu manager were stationed to receive the elephants. In the later records according to B.R. Gopal the term senābōva or the fifty two are not found. Probably the Mysore kings must have appointed their own officials to manage the temple.

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9. ibid, p.37

At present the temple is being managed as the other emples.Rāmānuja wanted people to live a full life by recognising he importance of the ultimate spirit. He gave an educative bias o the system so that man could serve God all his life out of free vill and pleasure. His active life in Melkōṭe had achieved this ;oal and this temple even today stands as a challenge against ıge.

KĀÑÇĪPURAM TEMPLE

There is no written account as the Koil Olugu available 'or the Kāñçi temple, there is inscriptional evidence which ›rovides valuable data and throws light on the function and 'unctionaries of the temple.

They are grouped under three heads -

1) The arçakas and scholars
2) People who rendered artistic and manual work.
3) Managers who attended to administrative supervision and maintenance of account.

Jīyars of good learning functioned as spiritual heads in the emple. They also gave initiation and enlightenment to their lisciples. During festivals, the jīyar took a leading part in the ›rocession along with the prabandham reciters.

The Śrīvaiṣṇava families chanted the Sanskrit Vedas and the ›rabandhas. They were an important group who entered into ıgreement with the donors and implemented the provisions of he agreement. For the chanting they got a regular emolument n kind and cash. Next came the arçakas who got the share in he food and cash award alongwith individual devotees' donation. .ikewise there were metal workers, carpenters, blacksmiths etc..

On the administrative staff the chief officers were the 1) ›rīkāryam, managers 2) The Karṇattān - an accountant and ecord keeper, 3) Śrībhanḍārattār in whom was entrusted the :harge of the temple treasury. The most important of these were he Stānattār, who were the board of trustees selected by the ocal people who did all the transactions like receiving gifts and ulfilling the purposes of endowment. They were the recipients ›f the first tirtham and Arulappāḍu rights.

In medieval times government did not interfere with the nternal affairs of the temple. The monarchs only gave grand

benefactions and a local officer of the king was held for general supervision. This was the case till the 13th century. Special offerings were made in honour of these kings on occasions. During this time of Vijayanagara King Venkaṭa-II Śrīkāryaduraṅtaras for all the Viṣṇu temples around Kāñçi were appointed[10].

The post of Śrīkāryam in Kāṇçi was held by eminent men like Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Iyengar and Alagiya Maṇavāla Jīyar. Then came the Tātāçārya family who carried with them the Vijayanagar royal order. But the Tātāçārya was only one of the two managers the other being one of the Sthalattārs. The Tātāçāryas almost lived in royal splendour, but with the death of Venkaṭa-II and the consequent civil war, the Tātāçāryas lost their power and the sthānattār had the upper hand. In 1710, Rājā Tōḍarmal became the Śrīkāryam who in turn conferred the right on Attainjiyan's son. This continued for generations. Since then there have been disputes for the right of managership which led to the assumption of management by the government of the East India Company directly till 1842. It clearly defined the functions and power of the board of revenue, the collectors and the managerial staff of the temple. This was very beneficial to the temple.

When in 1841, the East India Company was asked to sever connections with religious institutions, the vigourous fight for the posts of Dharmakartas or trustees started between the descendants of Attan Jīyar and the Tātāçāryas. Finally, the collector found that the board of revenue felt the application of Tātāçārya relevant and thus he was appointed the trustee in 1842. This continued till 1921. The tenkalai sthanattar started a row over the powers enjoyed by the *Tātāçāryas*. They resorted to the law courts and finally to the High Court. The scheme issued by the court proved a failure and a second scheme was arrived at by which the executive management was to be held by a non Śrīvaiṣṇava an appointee of the Hindu religious endowment. Two members of the Tātāçārya family were honourary trustees. The present day administration is an improvement over the previous arrangement. Since then there has been no departure from the judicial decision.

10. Śrī Varadarajaswami Temple - Kanci, p. 123

Though Rāmānuja was not directly associated with the ıdministration in this temple, in the formative years of his life ıe had ample association with the Lord Varadarāja, under whose :ommand he took to the ascetic order, to serve the Lord's cause, ınd it is to be noted that he started kaiṅkarya by bringing jars ›f water for the ablution of the Lord and on many occasions, he ıad visited this shrine to get the direct blessing of Lord Varada or his endeavours. Thus it is his writ which is held supreme ıere too. In short Kāñçī is hailed as one of the three main shrines ›f the Śrīvaiṣṇava fold known as Perumāl kōil, the others being 'eria Kōil (Śrīrangam) and Tirumalai.

While Nañjīyār and Pillān were using Maṇipravāla :ommentary as medium for developing Ubhaya Vedānta, ‹urattālvān and Bhaṭṭar used the Sanskrit medium. These even ncluded commentaries by Engalālvān on Viṣṇu purāṇa, Nañjīyār ›n Śrīsukti and Bhaṭṭar on Viṣṇusahasranāma and Aṣṭaślōki. The mportant Tamil poems - Rāmānuja Nurrandādi, Jnānasāra and 'raméyasāra of Arulalapperumāl Nāyanār were also composed at his time. In the 15th century Maṇavālamāmuni wrote :ommentaries on these two. In the 13th century the development ›f Śrīvaiṣṇava thought in Sanskrit, Tamil and Maṇipravāla :ontinued vociferously.

While Naṁpillai and his disciples were lecturing and :ommenting on the Ālvār's hymns Naṭāturammāl and his lisciples were expounding Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta. Ammāl's *'raméyaśāra* Tattvanirṇaya and Tattvasāra deal with Vedānta and Nyāya. The view of prapatti and bhakti in Prapannapārijāta lepend heavily on Pāñçarātra authorities. Naṭātūr Ammāl's lisciple Kiḍāṁbiappullār's works are recorded in a work called Nyāyakulīśa. Another was Sudarsansūri who wrote the greatest :ommentary on Śrībhāṣya the Srutaprakāśikā. During the time of Maṇavālamāmuni Kāñçī became a centre for sanskrit scholarship ınd Śrīrangam for Ālvār's hymns.

The interpretation of the Śrīrangam school had a superior ım of disseminating the spiritual knowledge to the masses, the Kāñçī school stood by the Vedic authority. In the 13th century he Śrīrangam temple was being controlled by a powerful ıon-brāhmin clientele of landholders. The entrance of sudra ommunity in the liturgical life of the temple must have had ven the sanction of Yāmuna. It is here that the first incorporation ›f prabandham with daily worship had occurred. The lectures ›y Yāmuna and Rāmānuja must have been attended by a

mammoth audience. They were full of everyday analogies. While the Sanskrit tradition in Kāñçī goes back, it was in Rāmānuja's time that this incorporation must have happened in Varada temple. But the Kāñçī āçārya's debates were to defend their doctrine with logic and with aid of pramāṇas. Initially, the two schools were complimentary to each other. After some years, the gap between them became more wide and manifested in doctrinal differences. It resulted in a split and gave way to two sets of Guruparamparās. So far as the administration is concerned Uḍayavar Tiṭṭam continued. Rāmānuja followed both the methods in his expositions. But later all scholars who believed in the orthodox and traditional school flocked to Kāñçī leaving behind Nambillai's more popular and devotional creed following at Śrīrangam. This system condemned caste and it's rigidity.

Vedantadesika whose aim was to fortify the Vedāntic system against the rival schools offered a clear exposition in all possible ways for good understanding. It is said on the request of Lord Ranga he assumed leadership at Śrīrangam soon after Malik Kafur's raid in 1310, carrying on with the prodigious tasks of delivering lectures and writing commentaries and large number of minor works. After some time due to the Muslim invasion he was living at an exile in Satyākalam. The party of Pillailōkāçārya and his brother did not look upon the rising popularity of Vedānta Deśika with equanimity for his position was as strong on the prabandha side as well which stands testimony to his proficiency in every field of the Vaiṣṇava lore. From the historical details we come to know that the temple had developed on the eve of muslim invasion to be a great centre of peaceful, progressive, religious and literary activity. When the muslim Ulug Khan massacred twelve thousand sanyasins who guarded the temple, Pillailōkāçārya who had a control in the administration of the temple took the Lord and fled to a southern direction for safety, whereas Vedānta Deśika took the single manuscript of Śrutaprakāśikā and also the two sons of Sudarsanasuri and fled to Satyakālam.

The Ādhīna of Kuranārāyaṇajīyar :[11] An important event in the temple is the installation of Ādhiṇa of Kuranārāyaṇajīyar who is credited with valuable services to the temple and to the town. He fought with the Śaivas of Jambukēśvaram and rescued the deity from being swept away by a swift current during the float

11. V.N.Hari Rao - History of the Śrīrangam Temple.

festival. He dug out a huge tank to the west of the temple for the float festival and installed many deities. The final blow against the Muslims was struck in 1371 and the temple was freed from muslim yoke. The Kōil olugu's inscription says that one of the officers of Harihara(II) inflicted defeat on the muslims at Kannanur and brought the Lord to Śrīrangam for installation on 17th of Vaikāśi in the year Paridapi in 1371 A.D..

Deśika who witnessed the event with great delight came and settled in Śrīrangam. He also composed the Rahasyatrayasāra, the doctrine explaining prapatti. The literary works of this time made exclusive reference to Gopanauḍayar as a benefactor of the temple on the occasion of the restoration.

There was no worship, many structures were destroyed and the literature scattered. The temple treasury and granary had been emptied and jewels plundered. the devadāna lands had been over run. At this time the Uttamanaṁbis became the wardens of the temple and built meaningful connections with the court of Vijayanagara.

An inscription of 14th century on the south wall of the prākāra is engraved in Tamil characters about a council of ten kottus, four form Sanyāsins and desāntris representing the Çōla, Pāṇḍya mandalas to appoint ācāryas, to spread the tenets as well as the properties of the temple and its maintenance. The velakāras helped in discharging the duties.

The role of Uttamanaṃbis : These were the brāhmaṇas of the pūrvaśikhā sect, claiming descent from Periyālāvār. One of these invited Kampana-II to visit the temple which resulted in big benefactions. There has been lot of benefactions by the Vijayanagara kings . One Virūpākṣa-II viceroy of Harihara-II has been very generous. So the name Viruppantirunāl was given in his honour for the Cittrai festival. He even got installed an image of Sudarśana Perumāl and Narasiṁha. The Kōil Olugu and Lakṣmī Kavyam speak of the Uttamanaṁbis.

Though the provincial government was well organised, the tax collection oppressed the people and their religious institutions. So in 1489 three persons in protest killed themselves. The Raya then issued an order to effect that no tax was to be imposed on devadāna lands.

Deśika lived and taught in those turbulent days of Muslim invasion. His death almost coincided with the birth of Maṇavālmāmuni who brought peace for the propagation of his

creed. Though both Deśika and Maṇavālamāmuni were looked upon as the heads of two rival creeds we will have to exempt them from the stigma of partisan spirit ; the two groups lost sight of the value which both leaders preached all their lives. Maṇavālamāmuni's achievements fulfilled the need of his time by applying radical elements in Rāmānuja's teachings. At this time the temple was repaired, religious texts were gathered and also spiritual perception commenced. Vedānta was taught to the masses as well as the scholars. The 'Īḍu' remained almost a secret work passed from father to son or guru to śiṣya. Maṇavālamāmuni expounded it many times and made it a qualifying study for preachers.

Rāmānuja brought out an outstanding revolution in the religious life of India to restore the much lost tradition. His reforms brought the God of the Upaniṣad to the common man without violating the ancient tenets. Moreover, the doctrine of grace as elucidated by the Ālvārs served him admirably, which universality inspired later preceptors and his creed went all over India. In fairness to Maṇavālamāmuni the last of the distinguished band of Āçāryas it must be said that he consolidated the work of Rāmānuja and made the south Indian Vaiṣṇava community, a united one inspite of differences in ideology.

THE LEGACY RĀMĀNUJA LEFT BEHIND

TEMPLE AS THE MEANS FOR MORAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL COMMUNICATION

Worship of the deity in the concrete form of an idol has been in vogue from times beyond human memory. It is hard for even eminent devotees with abiding devotion to God to think constantly of and visualise God in mental state even by deep contemplation. It is the figure of the idols that represents God and is ever present before the devotee. This form is to be treated as that of sattva guṇa. God, whose real form is of subtle knowledge, has really no concrete and finished form. Yet, he takes the latter form of matchless beauty to shower His grace upon His devotees.[1] This form offers full joy to the eyes of mortals, delight to their minds and exhilaration to their hearts.[2] Such a figure arouses pleasurable sensations in the people and that Hari is evidently within the easy reach of those people through their devotion for Him[3].

Temples have been in existence in India from the earliest periods, as recorded in the Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Purāṇas and kindred literature. The four thousand hymns of the God-inspired Ālvārs reveal that temples had been in existence even before their period, where the idols of God Viṣṇu were honoured through their soul-stirring hymns. There is no evidence however to indicate where the few or all those temples were in an artistically constructed form. All the same, they were in an attractive form before and during the period of Rāmānuja. Ālvār Tirunagari, Alagarkōil near Madurai, Śrīrangam, Śāraṅgapāṇisvāmi temple at Kumbhakoṇam, Tirukkaṇṇapuram, Tiruvahīndrapuram, Śrīmuṣṇam, Maḍurāntakam, temples of Vaikūṇṭhanātha, Aṣṭabhujapperumāl, Yathōtkakarisvāmi and Varadarājasvāmi at

1. Īśwara Samhita, 2.9
2. Parama Samhita, 3.31
3. Bhrigu Kriyadhikara, 1.13

Kāñçī and Tirumalai could be mentioned here to have been in a flourishing condition at that period.

It was Yāmunāçārya (916-1040) who made Śrīrangam the foremost seat of Vaiṣṇavism. Rāmānuja followed suit. It was at the hands of Rāmānuja that the temple assumed supreme importance. He did contribute much to the upkeep of the systems of services at the temple at Śrīrangam. Reforms were introduced in the temple at Tirumalai. The one at Tirunārāyaṇapuram (Melkōṭe) owes its discovery, growth and development mainly to his efforts.

Rāmānuja was largely responsible for the spread of Vaiṣṇavism in south India, particularly in Tamilnadu, the influence of which spread far to the northern areas of India. His Śaraṇāgatigadya played a wonderful role in making people realise that they should spend their lives in places where temples are situated. It is in the Gadyatraya, of which Śaranāgati gadya' forms part, we are presented with a dialogue between Rāmānuja and Śrīraṇganātha. After assuring Rāmānuja of His protection, the Lord asks the former to stay on at Śrīranga itself with joy. The words used are *atraiva Śrīranga sukhamassva*. The words *atraiva Śrīranga* have a pointed reference to the place where the dialogue went on. The words Sukhamassva convey the wish of the Lord that Rāmānuja shall live happily there itself at Śrīrangam. The word "Sukham", which is an adverb, means happily, that is, without any thought at mundane miseries or inconveniences. The word "Śrīranga" has far reaching implication. In the Vālittirunāmam, which is recited in all Vaisnavite temples without exception in all mathams and houses, the passage "Śrīmannah Śrīranga Śriyamanupadravam anudinam samvardhaya" is recited twice. It is really astounding that these words are uttered even before the important figures like Śrī rīnivasa, Śrī Varadaraja, Śrī Sampatkumara and others. Of course, this is the development of the post-Rāmānuja period. This passage may admit of two interpretations. One may be the imperative duty of every Vaiṣṇava to address the Lord in the temple or house while worshipping and to pray for the prosperous condition of Śrīranga may gather momentum and grow further and further without any impediment. The Vaiṣṇava is to address his deity in the temple or house as Śrīman, possessing Śrī or Lakṣmī. Śrīranga is to be stated as our Śrīranga, making a personal claim to treat Śrīranga as his own, is a very broad minded outlook of philosophical importance. The Lord is not only in the idol, not only at Śrīrangam

but is omnipresent (Visvavyapin). This leads to the second interpretation of the passage. Addressing God as Śrīman, the devotee asks Him to make the place where he prays grow and develop further and further like the prosperous Śrīranga.

When the Lord asked Rāmānuja to stay on at Śrīranga, we got the impression that we the followers of Rāmānuja, had been asked to live permanently at Śrīrangam or at any place where there was a shrine for Him. It may be Tirumalai or any holy place. This interpretation offers a solution as to why the Vaiṣṇavas had been living till the recent past in locations where the temples were already situated. In almost all such places, we find Sannidhi streets and Mada streets all near and around the temple. Persons living there used to visit the shrines there on at least two occasions in a day and have the opportunity to render service (seva) to God. This is fully evident in Śrīrangam, Kumbhakonam, Ālvār Tirunagari, Kancipuram, Tiruvallikkeni, Tirumalai, Tirupati, Tiruchanur and other places. All this is due to Rāmānuja's influence on the Vaiṣnavite community.

On the eve of leaving his mortal coils, Rāmānuja was approached by a host of his devotees who felt helpless and forlorn at the impending and inevitable separation of the master from them. He counselled them to follow his dictates: 1. One shall study Śrībhāṣya and preach them, 2. If one is not sufficiently confident to do this, he shall take up the Tamil hymns four thousand in number composed by the Ālvārs and spread them, 3. If this too is hard for practice, one shall go to the temple, bring water for worship bring leaves fruits, and flowers for God, sweep the floor, wash it with water and dry it up and decorate the particular places like the arches and entrances with festoons made of flowers, 4. If opportunities are not available to do this kind of service then repeat the Dvayamantra every moment, 5. If one does not have patience to follow this one shall be devoted to another person who is a Śrī Vaiṣṇava and become his constant follower, evidently as his servant or pupil. These five commandments of Rāmānuja were meant to provide a way of leading one's life for the cause of Vaisnavism. This worked well for a very long time after Rāmānuja's period.

After the demise of Rāmānuja, his ideals were preached and practised by his immediate disciples. They were followed in this by the Śisyaparamparas in later years. At the outset it must be said that jñāna and çarya were given prominent attention. By jñāna we mean that the apostles, pontiffs and Acāryas were bent

upon preaching the texts like Śrībhāṣya, Gitabhāṣya etc. Çaryā must have meant service, seva, kaiṅkarya. This had two-fold developments, one inside the temple and the other outside. The philosophical basis for the Vaisnavite system was strengthened and established through the teaching of the three texts - Śrībhāṣya, Gitabhasya and Upanisadbhasya to the pupils and writing glossaries and commentaries upon them. Likewise, the prabandhams of the Ālvārs were taught and expounded. Both had the backing of a philosophical atmosphere in the temple. It was in the eastern corridor of the garbhagrha of the temple of Śrī Varadarājaswāmi at Kanci that Nadādur ammal- Vatsya Varadacārya gave learned discourses on Śrībhāṣya. These discourses attracted scholars, from far and near. Sudarśanasuri, grandson of the brother of Parāśarabhatta, son of Kurattalvan, Atreya Rāmānuja, maternal uncle of Vedānta Deśika, were some of the most important disciples of Nadādur ammāl. Sudarsanasuri's contribution is of unexcelled nature. This commentary known as the Śrutaprakāśika is peerless but alas! the modern Vaisnavites, under the spell of materialistic attractions, are utterly ignorant of it or stubbornly indifferent to its study. Such discourses on philosophy continued in the temples, particularly at Kançipuram. This was the case with other shrines too, though the exact dates are not available about them.

Sudarsanasuri (1300 A.D.) tells in his commentary that Śrībhāṣya is at once another Śrīranga. At the beginning of his commentary on the Vedanta Samgraha, he mentions that Rāmānuja offered a discourse on Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedanta in the presence of Śrī Śrīnivasa at Tirumalai, once again showing that such discourses were held in temples. Manavalama muni (1450 A.D.) gave discourses on Divyaprabandha, particularly on the Tiruvāimoli in the presence of Śrī Ranganatha at Śrīranga. Till recently, such discourses were held in places like Tirupati, Tiruvallikeni, Tiruvahindrapuram and other important religious centres. At times, such discourses could not be had on a daily basis and so were arranged on occasions of annual festivals or celebrations of birthdays of Alvārs and Açāryas.

Morality or good conduct is upheld as the mark of a human being. This applies well to the Vaiṣṇava too. Anyone who beholds the idols of god in the temple from foot to head, would get rid off all his lapses in behaviour[4], even if one sees the form unintentionally or unexpectedly. Men whose mind are clouded

rould get rid of the residues of past deeds, evil intentions, wrong
:asonings, bad temper and atheistic tendencies[5]. The mind is
nder the full control of the evil-natured senses and so is
nmersed in meshes of evil. They will have their mind purified
nly as age advances. Experience of the world in years as they
)ll by teaches them what good behaviour should be like. It is
t this stage, they should go to the temple of Nārāyaṇa. They
rill then get their minds purified and become fit for God's grace[6]

Nothing greater is there for people than worshiping at God's
:et[7]. Both within and without the temple, the devotees of God
hould be respected. God is more delighted when His men are
:spected. Therefore, worship of the devotees is more important
nd pleasing to God than worshiping Him[8]. This attitude of a
'aiṣṇava towards fellow Vaiṣṇavas has continued in practice
ven to this day, though not with the same old spirit.

No distinction of caste, sex, age, wealth or power is to be
isplayed in temples. This is only a mark of moral behaviour.
his is found practised in almost all important temples everyday
nd more so on occasions of festivals. Mahotsava is a useful
evice, as it were, to inculcate this behaviour in people.
.athotsava serves as a good illustration. This practice is more
vident during Rathotsava at Kancipuram, where the temple car
oes not return to its starting point in a day. It used to take from
wo days to ten days in the past. It was then a sight to watch
ow people of all status mingled together. Recently, this was
ritnessed at the Rathotsava of Śrī Sarangapaniswami temple at
:umbhakonam.

Tirumalai, Kançipuram, Tiruvallikkeni and Śiirangam attract
uge crowds of people of all kinds who forget themselves and
ave the realisation that they are all devotees of God. It is said
1at purity will not be destroyed in temples, if people come into
ontact with others. Having been in temples, one shall not take
ath on their return to their homes[9].

Śāndilya Śruti, 2.89
Pauskara Samhita, 1, 31-32
Sattvata Samhita - 7.120
Parama Samhita - 3.31
Padmōttara Purāṇa - 29.81
Marici Vimānāraçanākalpa - p. 353

"Those who do not worship Kesava are sudras. Those who worship him are not sudras. The worshipper may be very low in social status. It is this belief that has been holding the Vaiṣṇava community together at least in the temples. One who treats others as belonging to a particular caste will surely go to hell"[10]. In the float festival, the float is verily Ādiśeṣa, the conch and seat of Viṣṇu. Therefore, no one, except those actually in charge of rendering service to God, shall set foot on the float[11].

There are many acts which are prohibited in temples. They are numerous and few among them are recounted here. Most of them are found in the Pāñcarātraraksa of Vedanta Deśika. One shall not eat or drink anything in the temple[12]. One's upper part of the body shall not be covered, the consequences are grave. Irrelevant talks shall be avoided. Discourses, if they are held in temples, should be listened to and at any rate shall not be stopped. Finding some eminent Vaiṣṇava in a temple, others should voluntarily render service to him. One shall not prostrate before any one while in temple, for God alone should receive any honour there.

One who considers the idol in the temple as made up of metal and the Açārya as an ordinary human being made of flesh and bone, will go to hell. One will have to stand to the right side of the deity. This practice is hardly followed and arrangements are made without reference to this rule.

Being in a temple, one becomes eminent, whether he has anything to do or not. Thus it must be admitted that morally, there is the sure possibility for an individual to evolve himself in the serene atmosphere.

The Vedic scriptures were open only to the three upper Varnas. But the Ālvārs' hymns were open to all. The Pāñcarātra attained a superior status, since it refers to the much ignored basic link denying the very existence of the world. Vedānta Deśika in his Rahasyatrayasāra affirms that problems that are not solved in the Vedas are solved by the Pāñcarātra. Āçārya Hridayam extols the Supremacy of the Tiruvaimoli over the Sanskrit scripture.

10. Ītihāsa Samuccaya - 27-26
11. Īśwara Samhita - 12-33
12. 1332. Sattvata Samhita - 21.41

The relationship between one ātman and several ātmans is also the body-mind relationship, which is natural and permanent The Çetanā is also the body of Īśwara. This awareness compels the human mind to engage in service. This is the crux of the Vedas and the Upanisads and is termed as Rahasya which is dealt with in the Pāñcarātra to a large extent.

The Upanisads advise remuneration for both private and personal interests. The Rahasya creates an awareness that remuneration is not everything, but continuous activity towards the brahman. Rāmānuja exhorts the members of the society to serve God with a purpose.

To a Hindu his religion is a way of life. Hence anybody who wanted to reform his society had to be a religious man. The emergence of Rāmānuja heralded mass awakening and became almost a movement; strict orthodoxy prescribed a six fold duty - Yagna, Yajana, Adhyayana, Adhyāpana, Dāna and Pratigraha. But even as an orthodox brahmin, Rāmānuja had an aversion towards discrimination in society on the basis of caste. His purport was to give and take.

Yasmin mleccho Api Vạrtate Tasmai Deyam tato Grahyam Sa Ca Pujyo Yata hi aham.

If it is to be found even in mleccha, make the offer to him, and receive the offer. He is as worthy as anybody else. If bhakti is found in a mleccha one should adopt the principle of give and take.

It occurred to Rāmānuja that no individual is to be over or under estimated nor excluded from his share or contribution to the society. Thus he recognised and included every one to shoulder the responsibility, which his instinct permitted. The concept of Tirukkulattar has a special mark. He had the unique instinct to convert his conviction to the spiritual side of life. During his sojourn in Melkote, and while crossing a jungle, the harijans showed him the way out of the forest. Thus he was able to reach the outskirts of Melkote and have the vision of the Lord. In fact,his spiritual journey could be completed because of the hill tribes, who showed compassion to an unknown person without expecting a reward.

Rāmānuja recognised them as belonging to Lakşmi and called them as Tirukkulattar. The caste bound section was perhaps guided by Parāśara, Vyāsa and Bodhāyana. The spirit-bound section was guided by Parāṇkuśa, Parakāla and Rāmānuja. So

Tirukkulattar belong to the latter. According to the Śrīvaiṣṇava theory, every living being, a creature of the absolute, can be engaged for service or kaiṅkarya. Thus he gave the Tirukkulattar an opportunity for Kaiṅkarya on the seventh day of the Brahmotsavam - Rathotsavam - Golden Palanquin.

There was a special group of Vaiṣnavites, who became disciples of Rāmānuja and looked after the functions connected with the temple. These are the Śāttāda Vaiṇnavas; meaning those who do not wear the sacred thread. Though they were not entitled to Vedic study, they were given the privilege of Pañcasaṁskāra. They included all non-brahmins, among whom a group emerged which accepted the view and way of life of the ŚrīVaiṣṇava. They constituted a small group, preferred a status for themselves between the brahmins and the non-brahmins on account of their vocational skills in medicine, art of decoration and a few manual performances of the socio-religious kind. The śāttādas claimed that they were brahmins, but neglected the sacred thread and the study of the Vedas. They are one up above the non-brahmins. During Rāmānuja's time they were known as Śāttāda Vaiṣṇavas. They preferred Śrīvaiṣṇavism to brahminism. Due to foreign invasion, brahminism was losing its vigour. Rāmānuja insisted on the permanent values of Śrīvaiṣṇavism which did not insist on the Śāttādas to wear the sacred thread. He gave them confidence to attain such attributes as dignity, functional distinctions and gave them posts in the temple according to their qualifications.

Origin :Their place of origin was probably Tamilnadu. Many also stayed in Andhra. Those who came under Rāmānuja's influence were from Venkatapura. They migrated to different places inhabited by the Vaiṣṇavas. They are found even in Karnataka and speak a particular regional language. In Melkote, they are known as Bethamangal Śāttādars, they had migrated as far as Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh.

Some in the community were Śrīmantangis, bearers of palanquins known as Tolukkinian who participated in processions and decoration of the deity. There was another group known as Sāttvika ŚrīVaiṣṇavas. People who live in the southern most parts of Tamilnadu are known as Kovithuraiyār. They belong to the sect of Tenkalai Vaiṣṇava brahmins; they are also known as religious mendicants, priests of śudra castes and are called KadriVaiṣṇavas, Sattadaval, Chatali, Kulasekharan and Samerava.

But when once they got fed up with these names, and preferred to call themselves as Prapanna Vaiṣṇavas, Nambi Venkatapura Vaiṣṇavas, and Dāsanambis.[13] Their gurus well known as Paravāsudevas, who branded their shoulders with Vaiṣnavite emblems. It is also said that they have been exercising authority with the permission of Açāryas and were worshippers of Hanuman. Their interest in the medical field is also worth noting.

They knew the value of herbs, fruits and flowers[14] and were also well versed in astrology, music and dance and in the art of decoration. They were immersed in Bhagawat bhakti, bhajana and kalaksepam. The purpose of their dance, was in significance with philosophic life in the presence of the deity. Even before Rāmānuja, these Açāryas had specialised in the art of religious abhinaya to convey, through this form of dance, the philosophy of life expounded in the Dravida Vedanta. Of course, this was confined to experts in Ubhaya Vedanta. Rāmānuja employed them by allotting duties, big and small, in holy places and bestowed on them due temple honours.

They took up professions like Ayurvedic doctors, and artisans making cot tapes, tassels, kumkum and Nāmam. They also built vāhanas. As reliable confidants of Rāmānuja they served him and implemented his reforms faithfully, gave up their lives in protecting the temple. They reared gardens and made garlands and sandal paste. Womenfolk kept the temple clean, drew pictures on the floor, and even made sacred mud balls (Nāmam) the sectional mark. They took care to watch the gates of the temple during the night time. Rāmānuja elevated this section of the community to a place of honour, by imparting to them the Vaiṣṇava culture. He preached and practised humanism and love among fellow beings. He visualised a classless society indeed.

Tondak-k-kulathil Ullir Vandu

Adi toludu - Pandaikkulattai

**Tavirndu Pallandu enmine.*

"You, belonging to the group of devotees, come and worship at the source, give up your former environment and pray for the preservation of that[15]."

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13. Lakshamma - Impact of Rāmānuja's Teaching on Life and Conditions in Society - p. 127 from Acārya Hridayam - 1 Sutra 86.
14. U.N. Hari Rao - The Śrīrangam Temple and Art and Architecture, Tirupati, 1967, p.8
15. Tiruppalandu, Divyaprabandham, Verse - 5

Many of the key posts such as temple accountants, managers were given to the weaver community. This reflects the liberalism of Rāmānuja as a sect leader and organiser. Even in Tirupati, many Śāttāda :r were appointed in temples.

Later, a few sanyāsins, at the behest of the master institutionalised their service, bringing into existence a custom of sanyasins being elected for service.

Rāmānuja visualised the need to provide an opportunity to the fellow beings to lead a cultural life. Therefore, he created a proper background to help fellow beings to look yonder. These intellectuals selected by him to lead men wrote works pertaining to the true nature of life. Some also wrote handbooks, some mixed with the people and spread the message. These works are highly classical, and are of substantial value.

Yādavaprakāśa, Rāmānuja's earliest guru who later became his disciple, wrote a book entitled 'Yati Dharma Samuççaya' - a discipline governing the life of a sanyāsin. Yagnamurti, a Sankritist, after having been defeated by Rāmānuja, became his disciple and wrote two works in Tamil called Jñāna Sāra and Prameya Sāra. Rāmānuja's successor Bhattār wrote a commentary on the 'Sahasranāma', the 1000 names. Govinda his cousin was a master in the art of abhinaya, the purpose of which was communication of religious thought. Another disciple by name Varadamuni wrote two books of classical value in Tamil dealing with the nature of the brahman and its power to save - Jñānasāra and Prameyasāra.

Pillān, son of Tirumalai Nambi, the maternal uncle of Rāmānuja wrote in Maṇipravāla, the first commentary on Tiruvaimoli known as the 6000. This is a presentation of Rāmānuja's thought in Sanskrit and the method followed is on the lines of Stotra Ratna of Yāmuna; this form became very popular among the masses. Bhattar expounded the Viśiṣṭādvaita system in his Śrīrangarājastavam, Śrī Gunaratnakosam describing the nature of Śrī. His commentary on the 1000 names, is on the message of Bhisma to Yudisthira in quest of lasting peace. He also wrote the Aṣtaśloki, an essence of Rāmānuja's philosophy. Another disciple by name Viṣṇuchitta wrote a commentary on the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and Sahasranāma. Garuḍavāhana Paṇdita besides being an expert in medicine authored the first Guruparamparā dealing with the Açāryapuruṣas upto Rāmānuja

known as Divyasuriçaritam. There is a slight dispute on the authorship of this work.

Andhrapūrṇa or Baduganambi, a bachelor all his life who served his master Rāmānuja, wrote the Yatirāja Vaibhavam - showing the supreme personality of Rāmānuja against Kali whose prabhāva proved ineffective[16]. Man is not the meek victim of the environment, but he can even conquer it according to Andhra pūrṇa.

Another scholar is Amudanār who wrote Rāmānuja Nutrandādi, consisting of 106 verses. This work brings out a clear picture of Rāmānuja's source of strength for overcoming obstacles and rescuing the less fortunate from the clutches of degrading forceś of life. It is also known as Prapanna Gayatri. Kidambi Accan wrote a terse work called the Nyāya Kusumāṇjali.

While at Melkote, Rāmānuja taught his Śrī Bhāṣya to one Somāyāji Aṇdān[17], who commanded a great respect among the eastern Śrīvaiṣṇava scholars of Tamilnadu, who were distributed in various places. He also wrote works summarising the philosophy of Rāmānuja, whose Śrī Bhāṣya is a comprehensive critical exposition of the Vedānta as contained in Vyasa's Brahma sutra. Rāmānuja's Vedāṇtasāra and Vedāṇtadīpa were written on the purport of Vedānta and as a digest of Śrī Bhāṣya. Vedāṇta Samgraha is another work of Rāmānuja which brings out the Upanisadic thought. His gita Bhāṣya gives vignettes of the different steps adopted on the pragmatic side of life.

The Gadyatraya dwells on the nature and outlook of the life of a person aware of his link with the Cosmos. Rāmānuja's Nitya is a guide to daily worship for the devotees.

Pillai Lokacārya of 13th Century and his brother wrote the Śrīvaçanabhūṣana and the latter, Acārya Hridayam Vedānta Deśika is hailed as the leader of the northern sect. He was a towering figure of the schools of Viśiṣṭādvaita. He had to work in the midst of various rival sects, creating numerous works with the aim of presenting Rāmānuja's thought. Amongst his works, significant ones are Satadūṣani, Tattva Mukta Kalāpa and Rahasyatraya Saram.

In his Tātparya Dīpika, he criticised Rāmānuja's Gadyatraya - Rahasyarakṣa - commentary on Yamuna's Catuśloki and

16. Dr. V. Varadacārya - Yati Raja Vaibhavam - 17
17. A. Govindācāryaswami - Life of Rāmānuja - p.243

Stotraratnam. In praise of the Ālvār's hymns, he wrote the Dravidopanisad Sāra and Ratnāvali.

According to Vedānta Deśika, a man after finishing his obligatory studies as bachelor, can take up the study of Mimāṁsā. Dharma is that which contributes to our good in accordance with injunctions. The instructions of the Smritis, Purāṇas, Pāñcarātras and Brahma sutras are to be regarded as dharma[18].

Vedānta Deśika was a genius, who could write poetry as well as philosophy with a blend of ritualism and spiritualism. Though antithetical to each other they lend themselves easily in his hands. He was ever quite familiar with the art of magic and mantra, which earned him the title of Sarvatantra Svatantra. He was an Açārya in the real sense. of the term who collected and taught the doctrines of Viśiṣṭādvaita to his pupils. It is recognised that none bears comparison with him.

The principal commentary of Rāmānuja's Śrībhāṣya (Śruta prakāśika) was written by Sudarsana Suri which is considered as the most competent commentary. It paved the way for further commentaries, like the Bhāva Prakāśika, the Talika Tattva-Sara, Tātparya Dīpika, etc.. These commentaries range from Rāmānuja's time to the 16th century. It will thus be seen that Rāmānuja's bhāṣya inspired many scholars and thinkers, and a great literature sprang up on its basis. Rāmānuja's Vedānta Sangraha was commented upon by Sudarśana Suri. The work is Tātparya Dīpika. Vedanta Dipika was commented upon by Ahobila Rayanatha Yati in 16th century.

Pillai Locāçārya, son of Nambillai, wrote many books of which three are Tattvatraya, Tattvasekhara and Śrī Vaçanā bhusana. The first is a compendium of Śrī Vaiṣṇava thought. Second says Nārāyaṇa is the highest God. The third consists of 484 sentences and occupies a pride of place. Among the thoughts he propounded is one that the mercy of God remains submerged in his justice and exists forever. Śrī or Lakṣmi exists in Nārāyaṇa as a dependent on Him. But as the greatest object of love for Nārāyaṇa. She has a twofold purpose, one is to turn the minds of the people covered with avidyā and second to melt the heart of God, to persuade His bliss to all people bound by Karma.

In the orthodox traditional society women were not given social status. Though they enjoyed enough freedom in the family and were respected, they were neither given education nor could

18. S.N. Dasgupta - A History of Indian Philosophy

they participate in religious discussions[19]. There have been exemplary women like Aṅdāl, wife of kureśa, who participated in open discussions. This shows the rare quality of Rāmānuja who recognised the need for improvement in the status of women.

He converted Bitti Deva to the Vaiṣṇava fold and named him Viṣṇu Vardana -One who nourishes the universal spirit. At Tondanur, Rāmānuja had to encounter formidable opposition from the local scholars, but he convincingly exposed the untenability of the opponents' stand.

The main wing to spread this kind of a culture was administration. Education had to meet the mental and spiritual needs of society. It is said that he enjoyed the company of seven hundred ascetics, seventy four scholars and intellectuals and twelve thousand disciplined followers both men and women of different castes[20]. Waited upon by seven hundred ascetics, by the group of seventy four title holders and numerous other devotees of Viṣṇu, Rāmānuja Yatisarvabhauma, the supreme ascetic stayed in Śrīrangam. The title holders are those entitled to function as Açārya Purusas. This is functional diversity in unity with dignity[21].

To enable the common people to get into the divine element, Rāmānuja emphasised the importance of temple worship, in accordance with the Āgamas. He did not introduce the system of Pāñcarātra on his own initiative. Even Vaikhānasa was prevalent in many temples.

The service of society depends on fulfillment of discipline. The subjective aspect of Vedanta is personal discipline. But the value of Vedanta lies in the effort to work for the salvation of society. Administration is an aspect of social function leading to peace and prosperity. Rāmānuja introduced the right type of administration on two different occasions. In Śrīrangam, he had to interfere with the administration of a temple. The other concerned a king already in charge governing his territory who sought advice for good administration.

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19. Parthasarathy. R. - Rāmānujacarya M.B.T.,- 1969 - p.44-57
20. Perumal Jiyar - Guruparamparā Prabhavam - p.368
21. Lakshamma - The Impact of Rāmānuja's Teaching on Life and Conditions in Society - p. 178

Rāmānuja was a philosopher but not a sectarian. He did not project any king of dictatorship to force his thought. The following thought may bring out Rāmānuja's idea on this score. The growth of the mind is not aimed at subserving the demands of the body, but its development should be such that the material aspect does not enslave through temptation the aspiration of the mind. This is the purpose of education as understood by Rāmānuja.

.He laid special emphasis on the outlook and attitude of a person, to hold administrative power. The paramount responsibility of the administrator was to hold the society together.

In Melkote, Rāmānuja found different systems of religions flourishing. One such was Jainism. He had to establish his stand in his philosophy. He made the Jains' debating power to a pulverised condition[22].

Society exists outside the temple also, though the temple was sought to be made by Rāmānuja as the centre of religious activity. His contributions to temple worship resulted in the rise of activities which helped the running of the temple administration and also became helpful for those connected with temple worship in some form or other. These activities may be described as religious in character. Some of them have a direct bearing on temple administration, while others are not practised in the temple proper. But wherever they are practised they have an indirect impact on temple worship.

Firstly, the Ahnika Kārikā a commentary on the Nitya of Rāmāńuja by one of his disciples is a magnificent product of the routine life which a prapanna is to lead. It is not unlikely that it served as model for similar manuals in later years by different writers. More than that, it has undoubtedly influenced the religious routine of the Vaiṣṇava community.

The items which are claimed to represent Rāmānuja's commandments suggest that every member of society, without any distinction of caste or sex, is given the occasion and scope for fulfilling his or her spiritual aspirations in accordance with his or her fitness and qualification. This is the second noteworthy nature of Rāmānuja's contribution.

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22. Perumal Jiyar - Guruparamparā Prabhavam - p. 341.

Thirdly, a flower garden was reared near every temple for preparing garlands for worship. Anantālvan, one of the direct pupils of Rāmānuja, attended to this work in the Tirumalai hills.

Fourthly, the Ālvārs were deified in temples and received worship like the principal deity. Festivals were conducted on a large scale, next in importance only to that of the chief deity. After Rāmānuja, his image and in later days, the images of Açāryas were also installed in temples, and festivals were conducted annually and occasionally as well.

The institution of a religious centre came into being under the name of matha. In fact, this took its rise during the period of Rāmānuja himself. An Açārya of great repute was made the head of each one of them. Generally, a sanyasin was looked upon as the chief of a matha. Quite often, branches of the matha arose in important places all over India, the headquarters being located at a particular place.

Sixthly, the line of Açārya Purusas was systematised by Rāmānuja. These were numbered as seventy four and were called Simhāsanādhipatis. They were all householders and were invested by Rāmānuja with the powers to perform pañcasaṁskāra to those who sought it for spiritual progress. Some of them offer, quite independently the pañcasaṁskāra, the burden of their pupils at the feet of the Lord, this act being called Śaranāgati or prapatti. Many of them received honours in important temples.

Seventhly, Rāmānujakutas (or choultries) arose to serve the needs of the Vaiṣṇava pilgrims visiting the holy places.

Eighthly, the Tamil compositions of the Ālvārs were given a place alongwith the Vedas during temple worship and private worship. They are to be recited daily in temples and houses during worship. On special occasions, they are required to be recited in full. Select portions are required to be sung both in marriages and during obsequies. On the occasion of temple processions, they are to be recited by those learned in them. A stanza in the Rahasyatrayasara of Vedānta Deśika describes them as purifying the streets by reciting compositions. They even resolve the doubts in the Veda. One noteworthy feature of temple and house worship is the recitation of two stanzas praising the divine command of Rāmānuja.

To sum up -

Rāmānuja's emphasis was on service, with a particular attitude in tune with the nature of finite self; in respect of the supreme self; with the knowledge of self reality and the moral of the rahasya. People were induced to a better form of life. Rāmānuja made them live a full life by recognising the importance of the supreme Brahman. Under his inspiration scholars spread the rahasya of Vedānta thought by way of discussions and discourses. With the effort of the sthānikas and āçārya Puruṣas, there came rich benefactions from the ruling class as well as common men. These were utilised in accordance with the tradition of temple rituals. The sthānikas also moved about and enlisted people belonging to the lay groups to contribute for running the temples on the lines of Rāmānuja's instructions.

After his time the caretakers did their best in preserving the traditions. They were genuinely trustees of Rāmānuja's institutions of Vedanta and religious life. With the change in the political situation, the spirit of co-operation among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas succumbed to self interest. The cultural power lost its grip and the matter went up to the courts.

Inspite of these adversities in today's circumstances, Rāmānuja's message of the need of unity, beauty in variety and a regulated way of life for a Vaiṣṇava is still cherished.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions emerge from our study ·

Indian culture and spiritualism were enshrined in temples which reminded people of their rich and varied heritage. It is here we find that the visible and tangible form of the Lord of creation installed for the specific purpose of worship by the devotees at large, to pray for a worthy and meaningful life here in this world.

Religion has played a key role in the evolution of society ranging from learning of scriptures to even art activities in India though its role is mainly in terms of the content and relevent ritual occasions; arts, rituals, festivals have been the necessary appendages.

The concept of Viṣṇu and the movement of Vaiṣnavism were being continuously reshaped and moulded by the areas of theology, rituals, cult and artistic mainfestations. The myth created by such an influence got transformed or modified through two ways of practice & pervasiveness of ritual. Visnu and Vaisnavism present a case for undertaking an investigation of the process of collective psyche, nurtured by a living oral tradition. The concept of Viṣṇu and the impact of Vaiṣnavism is only a part of a totality of Indian vision and approach.

All strides of an evolved Srivaiṣnavism moved towards a confluence in Rāmanuja who stood as a symbol of the unity of Sri Vaiṣnava tradition. The biography of Ramanuja is the sole monopoly of the Srivaishnavas. Contemporary references to him or documents or movements have not been traced. His biography is in a way immersed in myth. In spite of it we come to know he played a very important part and produced remarkable results as a faithful worker in the field of Hindu religious and social reform. He sought to prove that Nārayana was fit to be accepted as supreme God. In fact he was the first philosopher to perfect and establish philosophical theism. He enjoined on his followers that the supreme God Paramātma Nārayana alone should be worshipped. According to Max

Mueller, Ramanuja's philosophy is on many points the more faithful of Vedantha Sutras. His analogy of self body relationship between God and the cosmos explains both the transcendence and immanence of God.

He made bhakti the sole means of worship of the supreme God. Bhakti became the pivot of Rāmanuja's popular religion. He declared bhakti as the most suitable means to achieve salvation. His religion is known as Śrivaiṣnavism since Lakṣmi or Sri represents the power of prakriti and she is the meadiatrix who intercedes between weak and suffering mankind on the one hand and God on the other, she tempers His severe justice with tender mercy.

His religion in the earlier days represented allied streams of thoughts like Viṣṇu Narayana worship, āgamic Vaiṣnava movement, the mantra school and the Vedanta school running on parallel lines. Rāmanuja synthesised all these and consolidated them into a strong philosophy. He introduced the double tradition of Sanskrit and Tamil Srivaiṣnava theism the Ubhaya Vedanta. He got treatises written on the divine four thousands too.

His major work was his accomplishment in the difficult task of formulating details of daily worship in temple and their efficient administration. In this he had to eliminate the non-Srivaiṣnava rites in the temple, and introduced new rules and changes. His code known as Udayavar Tittam has stood for nine centuries.

Ramanuja was against any monopoly of spiritual knowledge. This shows his liberalism in the religious sphere. He applied the same principles in the social and political spheres as well. He encouraged the harijans for temple worship at Melkote, which gave a wide scope for the uplift of the lower classes and is a land- mark in the social history of India. He employed non-brahmins, by allocating jobs in the temple. His preference for the āgama doctrines shows his keenness for caste equality before God. Karma according to him is not only rituals but also proper and devotional worship.

In matters of the state exercising religious power through priests and in turn the priests to exercise political power, he firmly believed that a temple servant or a monk must prove his moral worth, and in God's service one should not totally surrender to the state. It happened in his own life when it pleased God to set Ramanuja like a solitary pond fish to face the

tyrant of the Çola king in the chess board, he defended God's honour peacefully with no argument but with compromise took full challenge of his office in the soaring force of what he knew to be right. He must have told Lord Ranga, "I fight with the weapon, you have so pleased to give me, and for the rest thy will be done". He zealously loved and guarded the honour of God. It anything was worth doing, it was worth doing it well. He replaced his saffron robe for an adornment in white clothes for his Lord's festivities. How heavy must have been the Lord's honour to bear at that adverse moment.

For a worthy cause, the temple must exist peacefully within the frame work of the state. But when there was a clash, it came like an avalanche. Rāmanuja strongly advised his followers not to care for political power and live in towns, but instead, to live around the temples as unified religious communities.

But lo the present day religious life of a Srivaişnava has stagnated since the time of Manavala Mamuni and has become temple centred, limited to worship and recitations of Vedic and Prabhanda hymns. There has been no creative scholarship, or spiritual practices.

With the knowledge of the structure of reality, and the rahasyas Rāmanuja inculcated the spirit of service in his followers' minds, in which is included the renowned service of the tadiyas - under the doctrine of Tadiyāradhana, (social worship). This was started as a system of social service economically. Thus the temple became a centre of both worship and feeding.

Service was focussed in the form of Tadiyāradhana. It is even said that Ramanuja instituted the system of distributing the consecrated food amongst all those present irrespective of creed and sex. If work was allocated to all according to the need, even concecrated food was distributed. Free dispensaries were opened inside the temples, for proper medical care of the employees of the temple. So the maxim was if one took care of the temple, the Lord in turn took care of the worldly and spiritual needs of the bhakta. Secondly, it is not easy to perform Tadiāradhana on all days, which involved men and money. Instead the little concecrated food is like manna in the wilderness for the bhakta with its added taste due to the grace of the Lord and this is distributed in ghoşti an assemblage of the whole range of devotees.

During his stay in Melkote, he accepted in the services of the temple, other classes of people namely potters, weavers, washermen etc. He saw that people were engaged in production, and kept society self sufficient.

To spread this culture, the main wing he chose was temple administration. To meet the mental and spiritual needs of society education was necessary. He enjoyed the company of seven hundred ascetics, seventy four scholars and twelve thousand disciples, both men and women of different groups and castes. This is functional diversity in unity.

Before Rāmanuja's time, the disciple was the custodian of culture and others were only his aids. This is how the guruparampara was maintained. These Ācharya puruṣas were empowered with the privilege of contacting people, and performed Panҫasanskara for their disciples. These were mainly grahastas with a few exception here and there, who passed on the tradition and privilege to their descendents. Even today, they continue the culture of Rāmanuja. Later on these got institutionalised and were instrumental in imparting religious education in the form of residential universities (their homes). This movement kept the society enlightened.

The inimitable skill of Ramanuja in temple administration is marvellous. The four religious centres of Srirangam, Tirupati, Kanҫi and Tirunārayanapuram are remembered in order during rituals observed everyday at Sandhya.

"Sriranga mangalamanim karunāvilasam Sri Venkatādri Sikharālaya Kālamegham Sri Hastisaila sikharojvala pārijatam srisam namāmi sirasa yadusailadipam" I prostrate before the auspicious gem of srirangam, the home of compassion, the dark cloud, at the crest of Venkatadri (Tirupati), the intensely bright celestal flower of Hastisaila (Kanci) and the light on the Yadu maintain (Melkote).

Under the inspiration of Ramanuja and with the effort of the sthanikas rich offerings of land and jewellery were pooled together for the maintenance of all these temples. Inscriptional evidences support this fact.

Lastly the Gadyatraya of Rāmanuja is a touch stone for all Gadyas. It has been commented upon by three luminaries a) Vedanta Desika, b) Periavaҫҫanpillai, the prince among glossers and sudarsana suri. The Saranagati gadya is a dialogue between Rāmanuja and the Divine Couple at Śrīrangam. Rāmanuja

surrenders himself at their feet. Further he prays for paramabhakti the apex of intellectual love of God. Aphorisms eighteen to twenty four speak of the Divine boon g.anted. It is a direct petition to the Lord. In this Gadya the chanter is sent to the realm of ecstasy. Ramanuja imparts to his supplication the universal character by referring to Sri as **Akila Jagan Mātaram, Asmin Mātaram,** that is universal Mother my Mother". Here he identifies himself with the entire mankind to plead for them. In the Śribhaṣya though the Lord is identified as Brahman there is no mention of the Lord's feet. Prāpatti, means and end rolled into one does not get any exhaustive mention in Śribhasya. But the ommissions have been made good in these gadyas.

In the last Gadya - Vaikunta gadya, Rāmanuja tries to transform the masses into his own likeness through a thesis on the ultimate goal and means to attain that goal. Initial aphorism brings out the refuge at the Lord's feet, the means being the innumerable traits of easy accessibility, overlordship of the universe etc.. In the rest, he portrays the glory of the high heaven and its beauty before the devotee's eye where the Lord admits him into his fold. Aphorism 4 - His prayer having been heard by the Lord, the devotee shall stay in heaven duly discharging his duties. Aphorism 6 is the finale. The devotee standing in the presence of the Lord is greeted by sweet looks and loving attention and is called near. The devotee's joy knows no bounds. This entire secnario of consummation submerges him in total joy. Thus ends the Vaikunta Gadyam. This has got the only parallel in the Tiruvaimoli - the last decad of the last centum. Nammalwar voices his deep yearning like the full throated call for relief from his agony. The Lord finally takes him to his transendental abode, and holds him in his sweet embrace. These gadyas can be termed as Rāmanuja's swan song as that of Milton's "Samson Agonistes", the last of his works.

Amongst the religious leaders, Ramanuja stands out for his unique doctrine of Viṣistadvaita, the benefit of which was made available to the masses. Instead of running away from the world, he taught men to enjoy the paradise on earth. The Srivaiṣnava community stood for fraternity of one and all in society. To meet the needs of his followers, he evaluated all aspects of the societal needs, and evolved a harmon'ous system. With his doctrine, he established the world as real and unsullied. He gave a clarion call to men to render service to society and God. This service motive was emphasised repeatedly by him. He laid great stress

on religious rituals and practices, which made people experience religious joy. Though praiseworthy is Rāmanuja's system of social order, still it has had its lapses in the subsequent centuries, which is attributed to the influence of the spirit of Kali. It has in certain respects suffered a setback.

To quote Dr. Radhakrishnan - **"Rāmanuja trusts firmly in the religious instinct and sets forth a deeply religious view which reveals god to man through creation through the theophanies, through the prophets, and through the incarnations. His study of the Ālvars and his training by the Açāryas helped him to develop elements which otherwise would have remained latent in the upaniṣāds and the Brahma Sutras. He did not for a moment feel that he was propounding a system of his own; he was but expounding the wisdom of the wise of all times".**

Thus we know the emergence of Rāmanuja was a landmark in later Bhakti period. It was like the Karpaga Vriksha, whose branches spread far and wide both individually and collectively, the source being the principles of Rāmanuja's Viśiṣtadvaita.

In the post Ramanuja period, the custodians of the culture feared a threat for the system. So they introduced a prayer at the conclusion of temple worship, the sustained energy of the mandate of Ramanuja to spread far and wide[1]. In all religious conditions and times progress may not be hindered. May Ramanuja's mandate be developed and kept up and spread in all directions, for the well being of the world. This prayer is like almost a Kavacha-armament against heresy.

In a sense Rāmanuja made men realise that God was not only the author of existence, but an intimate personal friend and guide. It has been said the most outstanding power for right conduct is the felt presence of the eternal. If ever any proof is required for this experience, the temples are live institutions which reverberate the mandate of Saint Rāmanujacharya.

1. "Sarva-desa-dasā-kālesu
   a-vyāhata-parākrama
   Ramanujarya-divyajna
   Varādhatām-abhi-varadhatām
   Ramanujārya-divyajna
   Prati-vāsaram-ujjvala
   Digantā-vyāpini-bhuyāt
   Sāhi-loka-hitai-sini".

Rāmanuja established that God is absolute and perfect. In Viśiṣtadvaita the world is a moral order. Nature is both the environment and the medium for the realisation of the ethical values. Viṣiṣtādvaita emphasises the continuity and unity of man with nature and it is an aid for man to achieve perfection.

It is Ramanuja's established view that the world is never without God and it is through the world, that the jiva secures the chance for mingling with the Supreme. Rāmanuja's God was a personal being, full of grace and love, who needs man, as man needs Him. The individual soul shares His divine nature of omniscience and bliss. It is one with God yet seperate.

Institutionally he completed the behest of Yamuna, by harmonising temple worship with orthodoxy. His concern for social amelioration rose from his conviction that all jīvas are embodied souls with God within as antaryamin. He rehabilitated bhakti as philosophically valid and that God's grace alone mattered. This liberalism paved the way for further offshoots from Srivaiṣnavism in the North. These thoughts of Rāmanuja have endured because he made a creation - use of tradition to bring about social harmony through spiritual equality.

The Hindu temple inspite of ever so many modifications since many centuries expresses the character of the Vedic ethos. The Lord truly dwells there. The devotee should serve him as a true servant. The air of sanctity spreads an awe in the mind of the bhakta. The curtain before the devotee and the Lord represents the three gunas. Fascinating sthalapurānas are woven to throw light on the history. Besides them the inscriptios are also of great value. The temple was a busy place where the community met and enjoyed the grandeur of the Gods. Labour was equally divided kings preformed Tulābāras and got celebrated different kinds of festivals. All sections of people congregated to participate in the divinity around. In short, the Lord in the temple was taken as a reigning king and his abode was the storehouse of the community's life.

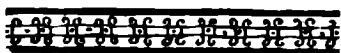
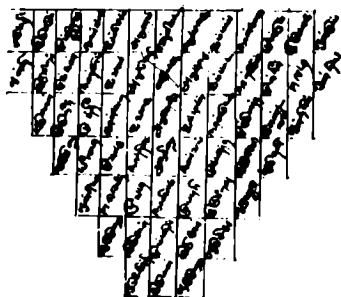
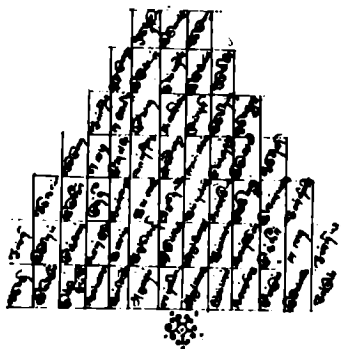
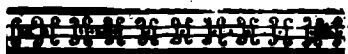
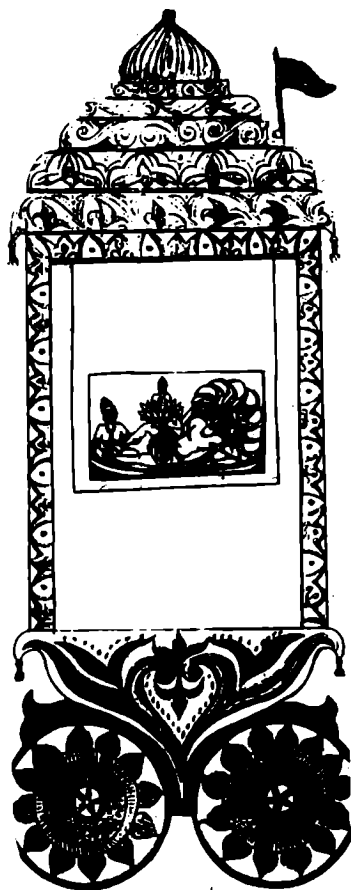
After Rāmanuja the scheme he offered was followed with the best of intentions and ability by his disciples in the field of culture, administration and temple worship. They were genuinely trustees of the Rāmanuja institutions.

In the subsequent centuries strangely the spirit of co-operation among the Srivaiṣnavas was declining. The followers of Rāmanuja indulged in attempts at agression against custom

and resistance to agression. Administrative power was the only controlling agent since the cultural power lost its grip. The matter went to the law courts, partisan spirit, time and wealth were mostly diverted towards settling this feud. The judgement of the privycouncil has upheld the sanctity of custom against variations urged by the impulse of agression.

Social service demands regulated life. That is the aim of Rāmanuja. He might not have been successful in meeting the needs of every Vaiṣnava, but he definitely urged the concept of unity with a regulated life in serving God. He felt that the only way to prosperity, was to develop the inherent power, of self giving, diving into depths of understanding to lift mankind. It is generally believed that all institutional religions reach a moribund state. But Ramanuja's religion is an exception if I may say so.

In spite of many pitfalls the sacred mandate of Rāmanuja has spread in all directions and is directed towards the well-being of the world. This the Vaiṣnava temple even to this day, preserves in a superior manner. Till very recently the life of the community was centred round the temple which served as an educational institution and provided opportunity to congregate for active communal work. In fact, the temple was the store house of the life of the community.

The most sustaining power of the righteous conduct is the felt presence of the Lord in the temple. If any proof is required that the temples are live institutions, the powerful shrines of Tirupati, Srirangam, Melkote and Kanchi are verifiable truths and Ramanuja is the most honoured prophet. We admire him for his propounding the theory of God as a person, in whose darshan, the bhakta undergoes a complete transformation, a sense of fulfilment and elation of spirit. Indeed he gets a feeling that the Lord is within him for ever, and that there is no need for other sources in terms of solace and comfort in this life and the life to come. It is the earnest duty of the coming generation to elevate the status of the present day temples to that of great spiritual centres and revive the eternal wisdom of the ancients of this land.

Tiruvelukūrriukkai of Tirumangai Ālvār
in the form of Ratha Bandhana

APPENDIX - II

The hierarchy of the Āṭāryas in both the schools of Śrīvaiṣṇavism

Rāmānuja (A.D. 1017 - 1137)

Śrībhāṣya School or Vaḍakalai	Prabandhic School or Teṅkalai
Kurukesa 12th Century	Bhattar 12th Century
Engal Ālvan 12th Century	Nanjiyar 12th Century
Nadādur Ammal 13th Century	Nampillai 13th Century
Vedānta Desika A.D. 1268-1369	Periavaççān Pillai 13th Cen
Naina Varadāçārya 14th Century	Vadakku Tirividi Pillai 13th Century
	Pillailokaṭarya 13th and 14th Century (Elder Contemporary of Vedanta Desika)
	Manavālapperumal Nainar -do-
	Tiruvāimoli Pillai 14th Century
	Manavālamamuni A.D. 1370-1443.

APPENDIX - III
PĀNÇARĀTRA

Avatāra or Vibhava incarnation is the concrete manifestation of kripa into all species and into the history of humanity when evil seems to triumph over goodness creating a crisis in moral life[1].

The popular view that incarnation is a super natural descent of Īsvara causing a vacancy in Vaikunta misses the truth of divine omnipresence and therefore fails to give a special interpretation to a spiritual truth. The evolution view describes the nine avatarās as successive stages in the evolution of the species. The theory of descent and ascent is anthropomorphic idea devoid of philosophic value. But for a man of philosophy, avatarā is a symbolic expression of Ātman entering into inner nature. The Gita guarantees God to everyone but in all, the avatara theory is a spiritual truth opposed to the evolutionary idea. It shows the saviour's grace during a moral crisis and gives solace to the devotee who thirsts for His presence. This helps the cosmic order and assures salvation. Sometimes the Lord enters into some jiva with a special form and accomplishes great things. This is known as Amsāvatara. In the Vibhavāvatara He descends of his own will for the fulfillment of a mission undertaken by Him. He disappears from the earth the moment the mission is fulfilled.

The Panççarātra system accepted by the later Vaiṣnavas is of five forms of the deity but in defence of the system Rāmānuja mentions only three in Śribhaṣyạ emphasising the view that from the worship of Vibhava one attains to the Vyuha and from that of Vyuha one attains to the Sūkshma the supreme Brahman called Vāsudeva.

ANTARYĀMIN AVATĀRA

This is the immanent phase of the Lord abiding in the region of the heart[2] of embodied souls and is realised only by the yogins.

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1. The Philosophy of Vishistadvaita, P.N. Srinivasachari, p.157

This form is explained beautifully in the Tamil hymns. By meditating on this form the yogi enters into the all-pervading Swarūpa (Sarvantharyāmin). Therefore, Brahman is immanent in the Jīva as it's Antaryāmin. This concept of Antaryāmin is a central one in Ramanuja's theology. The Pançarātra āgama[3] calls this form as Hārda (God dwelling in the Hridaya) and is conceived as an incarnation in the heart of the yogi. It can also be termed as general immanence of God in all his creations[4].

ARCA

The Arcāvatara or concecrated image is a fifth form. The devotees mould the image of Viṣṇu with a lovely form made of stone or metal. The image may be like that of Paravāsudeva or Vyuhas - emanations of vibhavas (incarnations) according to the taste of the devotees. God in his splendour individualises the form in order to satisfy his devotees and is the image and not in the image. This form is called Subhāsraya and becomes accessible to all and is a miracle of mercy. It also connotes the one absolute as the perfect self whose sole aim is to perfect the finite self and make it immortal[5]. In fact all the accessible five forms of the Panṭarātra are equally real in the philosophical sense. Here the Brahman and Antaryamin of the Upaniṣads is equated with the Vāsudeva of Pançarātra, the Bhagvān of the Puranas, the Avatāras of the Itihāsas and Arçā of the Alvārs.

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2. Śri Bhaṣya, 2.2.41, pp. 266-67 from Carman, The Theology of Ramanuja, p.179
3. Vedāṇtasutras - 1.2.19,
4. J.B. Carman - op. cit., p.180
5. P.N. Srinivasachari - The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita, p. 164

APPENDIX IV

श्रीनिवासपरब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः ॥

श्रीमद्भगवद्रामानुजमुनिविरचितं

श्रीभाष्यम्

शारीरकमीमांसाभाष्यम्

अखिलभुवनजन्मस्थेमभङ्गादिलीले विनतविविधभूतव्रातरक्षैकदीक्षे ।
श्रुतिशिरसि विदीप्ते ब्रह्मणि श्रीनिवासे भवतु मम परस्मिन् शेमुषी भक्तिरूपा ॥१॥

पुरुषार्थस्य ज्ञानैकसाध्यतया ज्ञानमार्गस्खलनस्याऽऽत्महानिफलकत्वेन तद्विपरीतज्ञानानामवश्यपरिहर्तव्यत्वम्, उत्तरभागे च तत्तदर्थोपयिकतया प्रसक्तानां पूर्वभागार्थानां शिक्षणीयत्वम्, प्रदर्शितयैव दिशा अनुक्तानामपि शिक्षणीयार्थान्तराणां सुकरनिर्वाहत्वं चाभिप्रेत्य ब्रह्मसूत्राण्येव भगवान् भाष्यकारः प्रारभते विवरीतुम् ॥

एवं प्रारिप्सितस्य प्रबन्धस्याविघ्नपरिसमाप्तिप्रचयगमनार्थं स्मृत्याचारसिद्धमिष्टदेवतोपासनरूपं मङ्गलं श्रौतमाचरति–अखिलेत्यादिना श्लोकेन।

"मङ्गलाचारयुक्तानां नित्यं च प्रयतात्मनाम् । जपतां जुह्वतां चैव विनिपातो न विद्यते।।" इति हि स्मर्यते [1] । आचर्यते च तत्तत्प्रबन्धृभिः। श्रोतृबुद्धि(मनः) समाधानार्थं शास्त्रार्थसङ्क्षेपश्चार्थतः क्रियते; यथा चोदनासूत्रे(ण) धर्मस्वरूपं प्रमाणञ्च श्रुत्यर्थाभ्यां निरूपितम् । प्रसिद्धं हि श्रोतुः प्रतिपत्तिसौकर्याय वक्तुरर्थप्रतिपादनस्य संक्षेपपूर्वकत्वम्, "इष्टं हि विदुषां लोके समासव्यासधारणम्" इति। शास्त्रार्थ संक्षेपेण वस्तुनिर्देशः, भवत्विति आशीर्वादश्च कृतौ भवतः। विनतेति, भक्तिरूपेति च ब्रह्मणि प्रह्वीभावावगमात् प्रणतिरपि फलिता । 'णमु प्रह्वत्वे' इति हि धातुः। एवं त्रिविधं मङ्गलमाचरितं भवति ।

श्लोकस्य प्रथमपादेन पूर्वस्याध्यायद्विकस्यार्थः संक्षिप्तः; द्वितीयेन तु उत्तरद्विकस्य । कर्ममीमांसायां प्रतिपाद्यभेदेन षट्कभेदवत् अत्रापि विषयविषयिरूपप्रतिपाद्यभेदेन द्विकभेदः। शास्त्रप्रतिपाद्यमुपायोपेयात्मकम् । सिद्धोपाय उपेयञ्च ब्रह्म। साध्योपायो भक्तिः । तत्र सप्तम्यन्तैः पदैः सिध्दोपायरूपमुपेयञ्च ब्रह्मोच्यते।

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1. स्मर्यत इति । मङ्गलाचारपदाविशेषात् आदर्शदर्शनादिनित्यकर्मणः कायिककार्यारम्भकर्तव्यविष्वक्सेनाराधनादेः वाचिकव्यापारात्मकग्रन्थारम्भकर्तव्यवाचिकदेवतानमस्क्रियादिमङ्गलस्य च वाचकम् । न तु तत्त्वचिन्तामण्युक्तरीत्या आदर्शदर्शनाद्याचारमात्रपरम्; सर्वस्य प्रमाणिकत्वेनानुवादसंभवादिति भावः ।

GLOSSARY

Abhinaya - Gestures.
Āçārya - Preceptor.
adhyayanotsava - the twenty day festival of the divine 4000 in the month of Margali.
Āgama - Classical Sanskrit field of study dealing with temples and rituals.
Agni - Fire - One of the twelve arādhanas
Ālvār - (lit. one who is immersed in God love. One of the 12 Aradhana).
Arayar - temple singer who recites the Prabandhas.
Arçaka - temple priest.
Arogyasāla - Hospital.
Avatār - Incarnation.
Bhattāl - Temple servant connected with worship.
brahmotsavam - the mahotsava which brings welfare to the state, and pleases the Lord.
Çakra - (lit. disc) Viṣṇu's discus.
Dasāvatāras - The ten incarnations of Viṣṇu.
Dhvajasthamba - Temple flagstaff.
dhvajārohana - mounting the flag on the flag staff to begin a festival.
Jyeṣṭābhiseka - performed in the month of Ani, where the mulabera, divested of its ornaments is given a bath.
Kārtikai - festival of lamps.
Manipravāla - admixture of gems and coral referring to sanskritized Tamil expressions in Vaiṣnavite writings.
mangalāsāsāna - wishing auspiciousness for the lord.
nityasūri - a free soul servig the lord in Vaikuntha.
nyāsavidya - surrender.
pançasamskāra - the five fold srivasnava initiation site.

prapanna -	one who has surrendered to the lord.
prapatti -	surrender to the lord.
prāyasçitta -	act of expiation.
rahasyas -	a Manipravāla treatise interpreting the three mantras of Śrīvaiṣṇavism.
rakṣa -	protection.
sampradāya -	tradition.
saulabhya -	accessibily to be available to souls.
sausīlya -	lord's ability to mingle with all.
śaraṇāgati -	refuge.
sēsa -	the soul being subservient to the Lord.
śēsatva -	slave to the master.
sesi -	master.
svarūpa -	the essential nature.
tadiyārādhana -	entertaining the devotees.
taniyan -	a Pandatory verse.
tattvatraya -	cit, acit, isvara.
tējas -	splendour.
upaçāra -	attendanc.e
vātsalya -	affection.
yantra -	metallic plate containing diagrams constituting the mantra of the deity.

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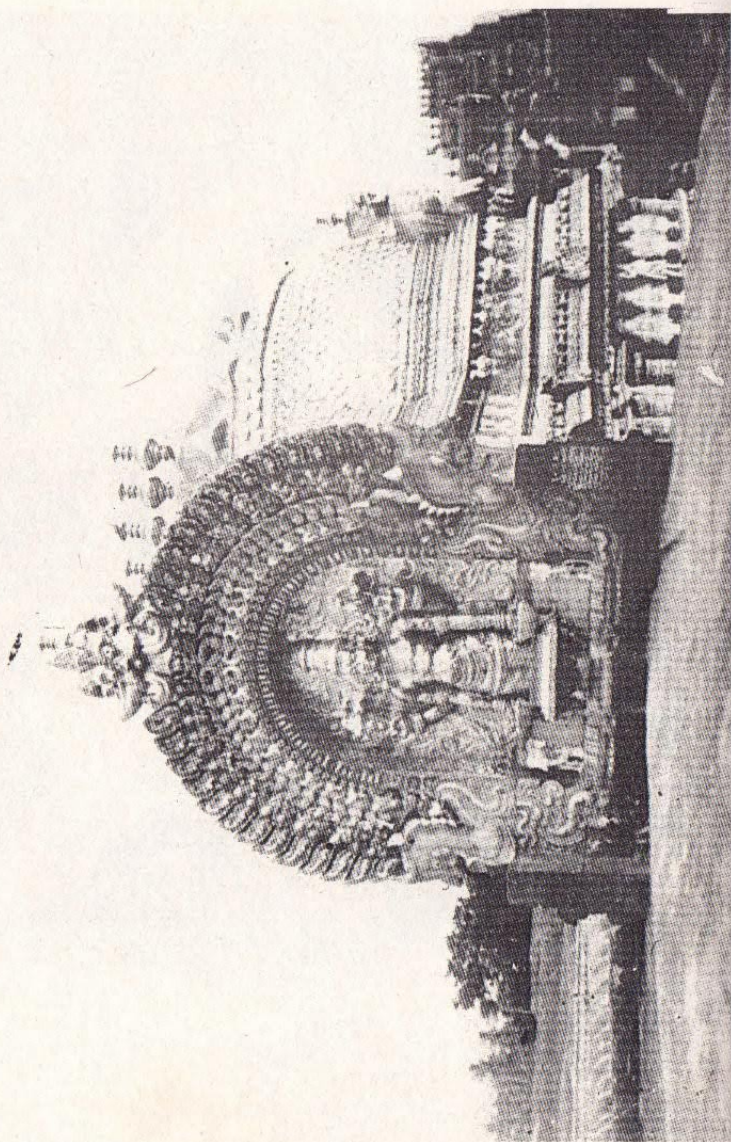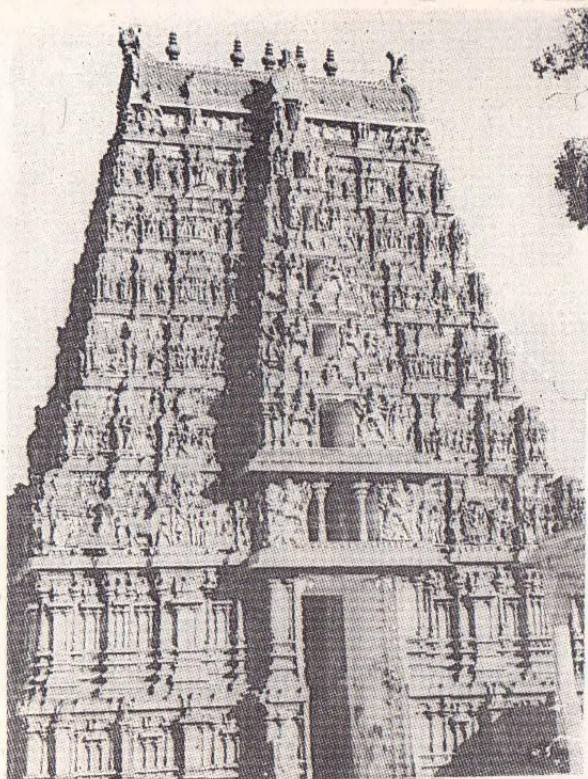
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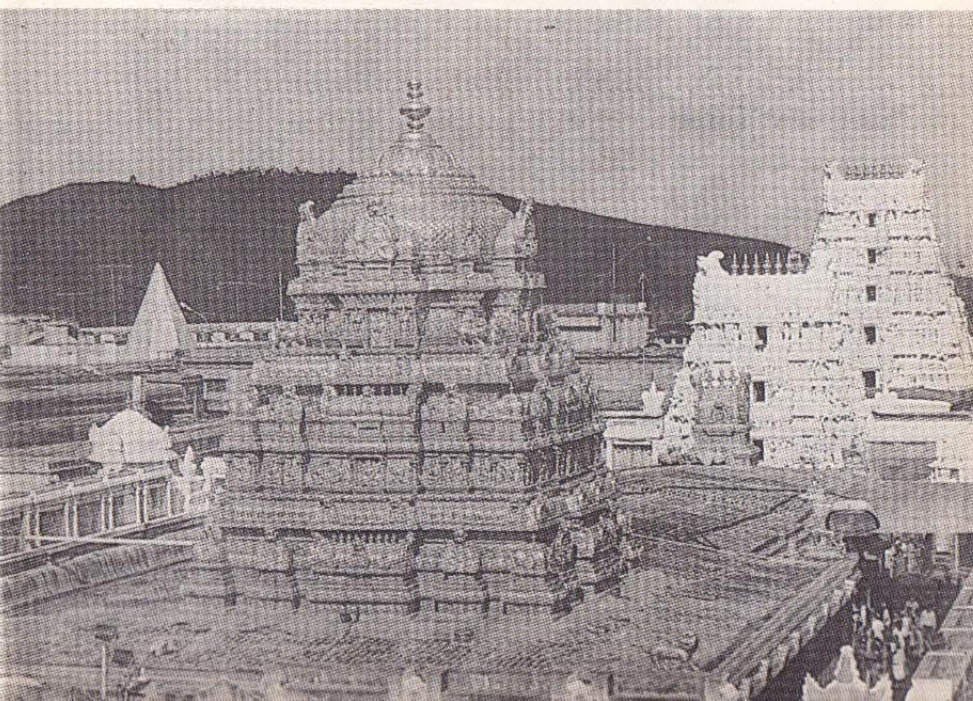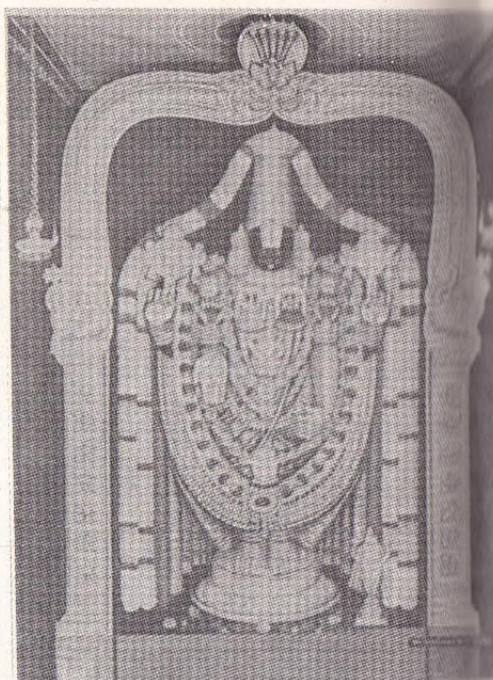
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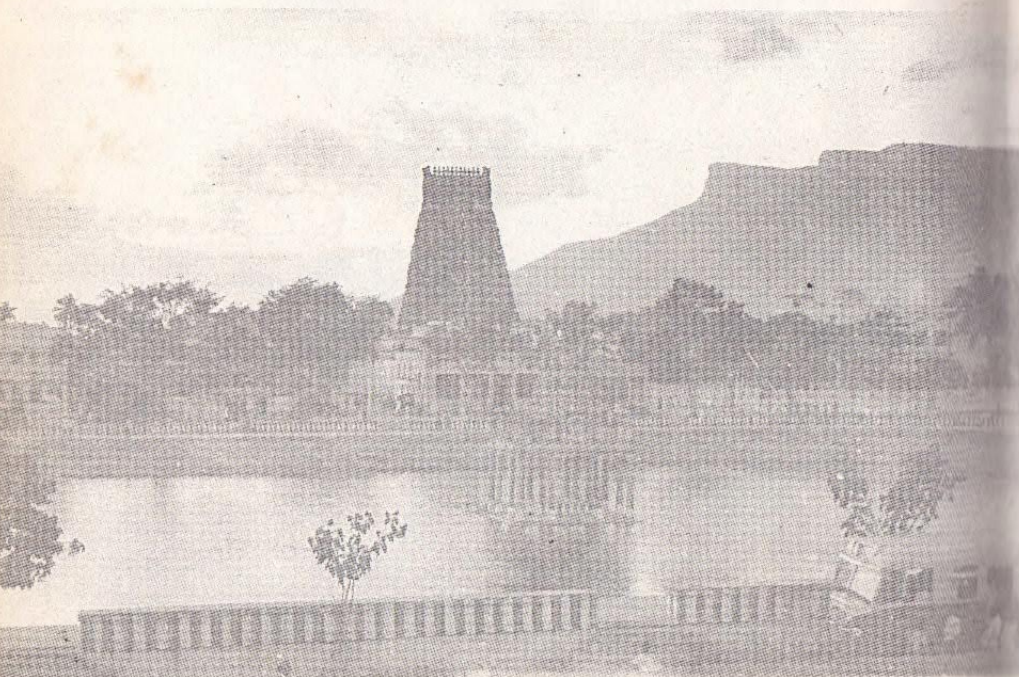
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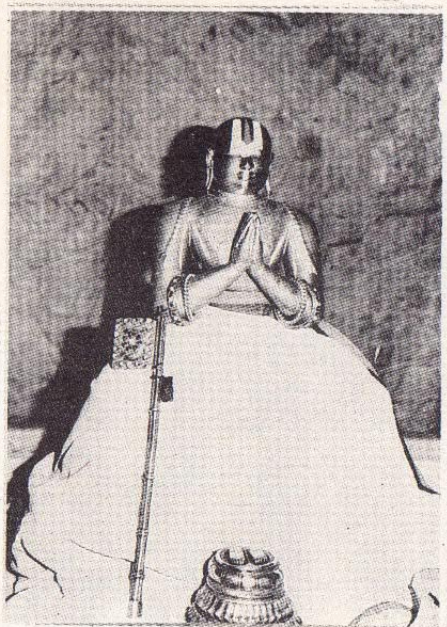
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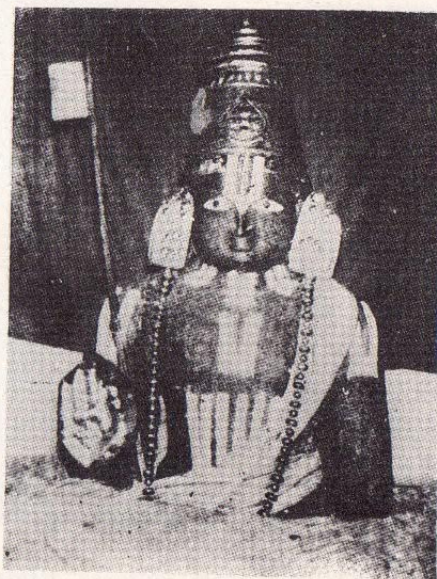
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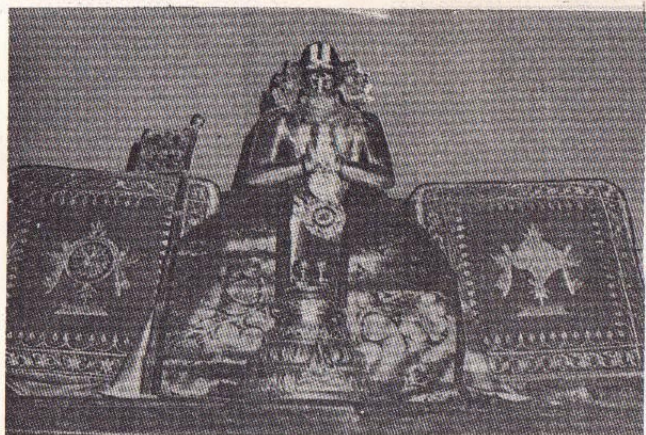
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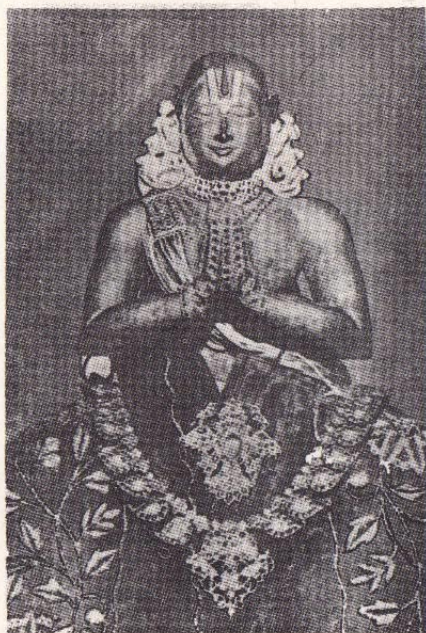
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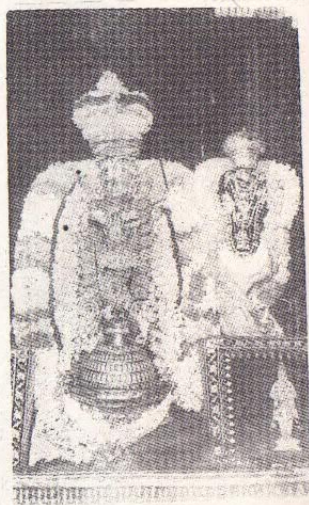
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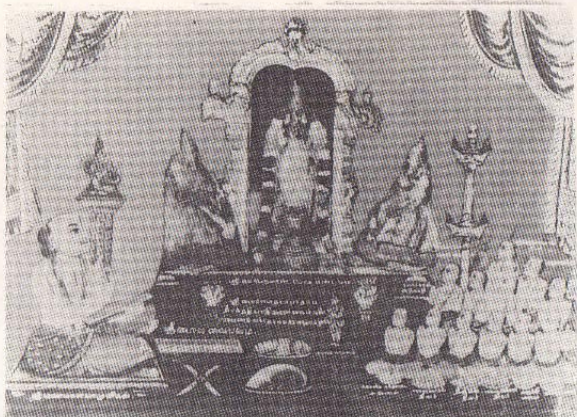
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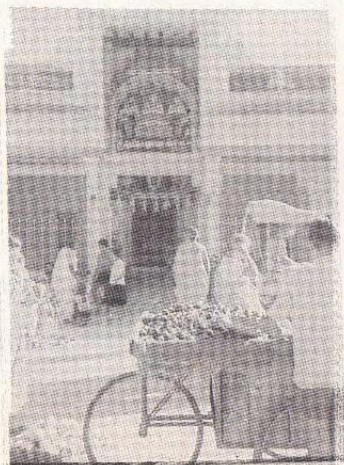
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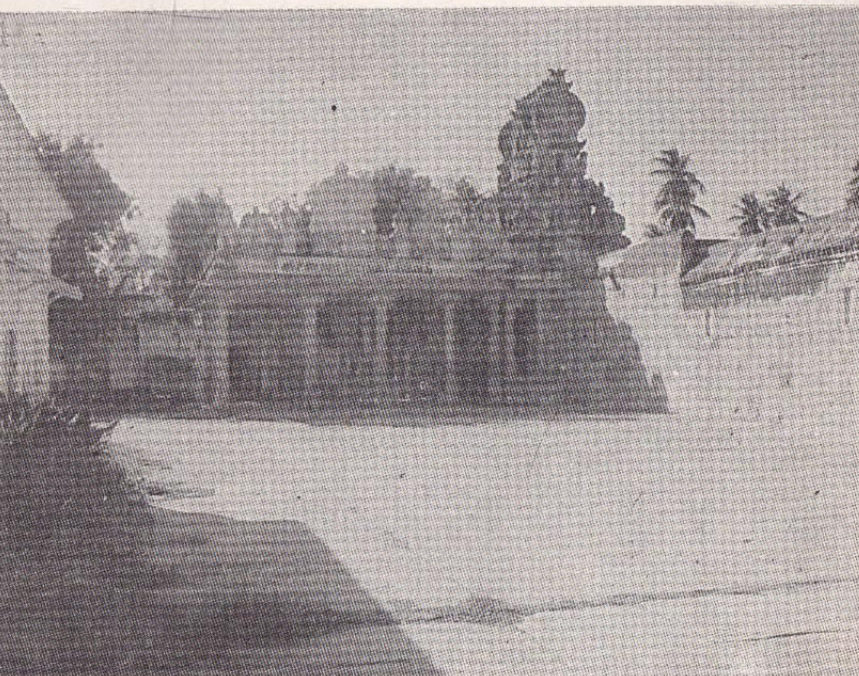
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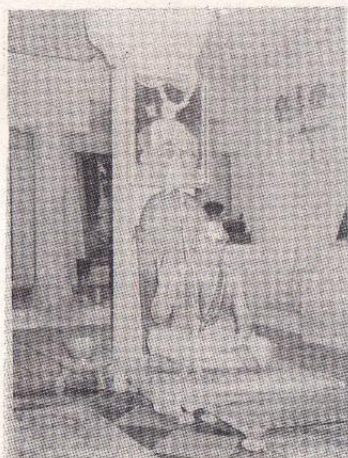
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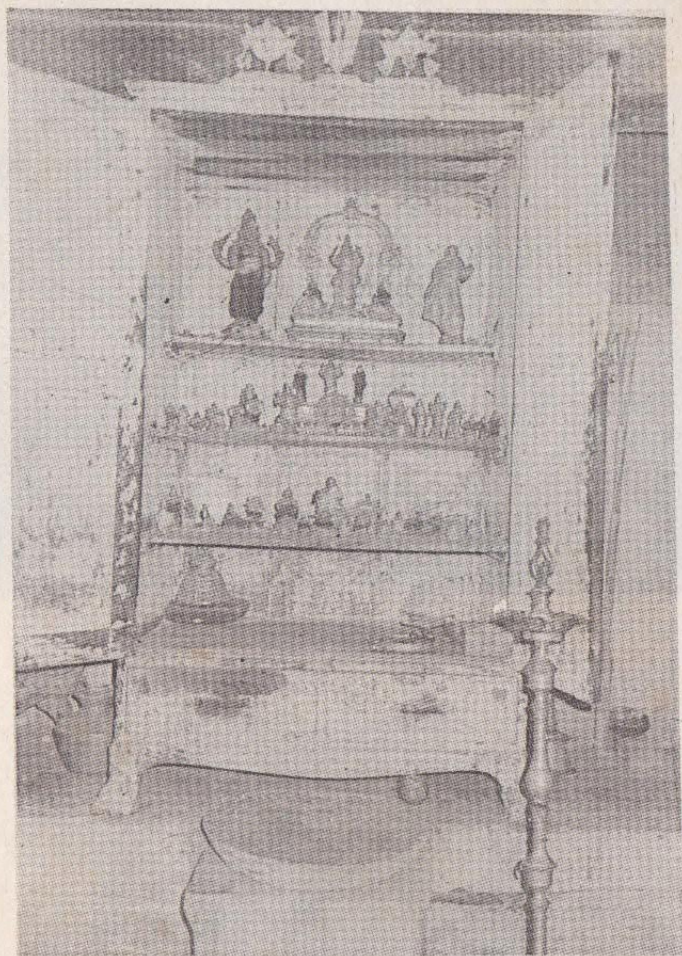
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Sarojini Jagannathan teaches English at a higher secondary school in Delhi.She is a post-graduate both in English literature and Sociology and has authored many books some of which are : (i) Kṣetrānjali - The temples of India, (ii) Tīrthānjali - The rivers of India and her monograph on Subramanya Bharati - sponsored by the ICHR, is in the offing.

The present work owes itself to a study grant given by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. It speaks of Rāmānuja's religion and contribution to Viṣṇu temple worship in south India. The author has brought out answers to questions unanswered till now, as to how the religious movement in the south has remained a temple based one. She has analysed the social content of Rāmānuja's Śrivaiśnavism, by establishing the fact that, though the theory and concepts of Viśiṣtadvaita have greatly impressed the Vaiṣnava community, temple worship also has remained equally popular and meaningful.

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was responsible for the hectic temple building activity, subsequently. By way of munificent donations, the temple became rich and it's income was diverted to promote agriculture and trade. Slowly, the temple evolved into a socio- religious centre. The brahmins were the greater beneficiaries, as they were the custodians of the Vedic tradition. Although, after Rāmānuja's time, a violent sectarian split tore the Śrivaiṣṇavas into two sects, the essential principles remained immutable and to this day, Śrivaiṣṇavism performs it's role in stabilising society.

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